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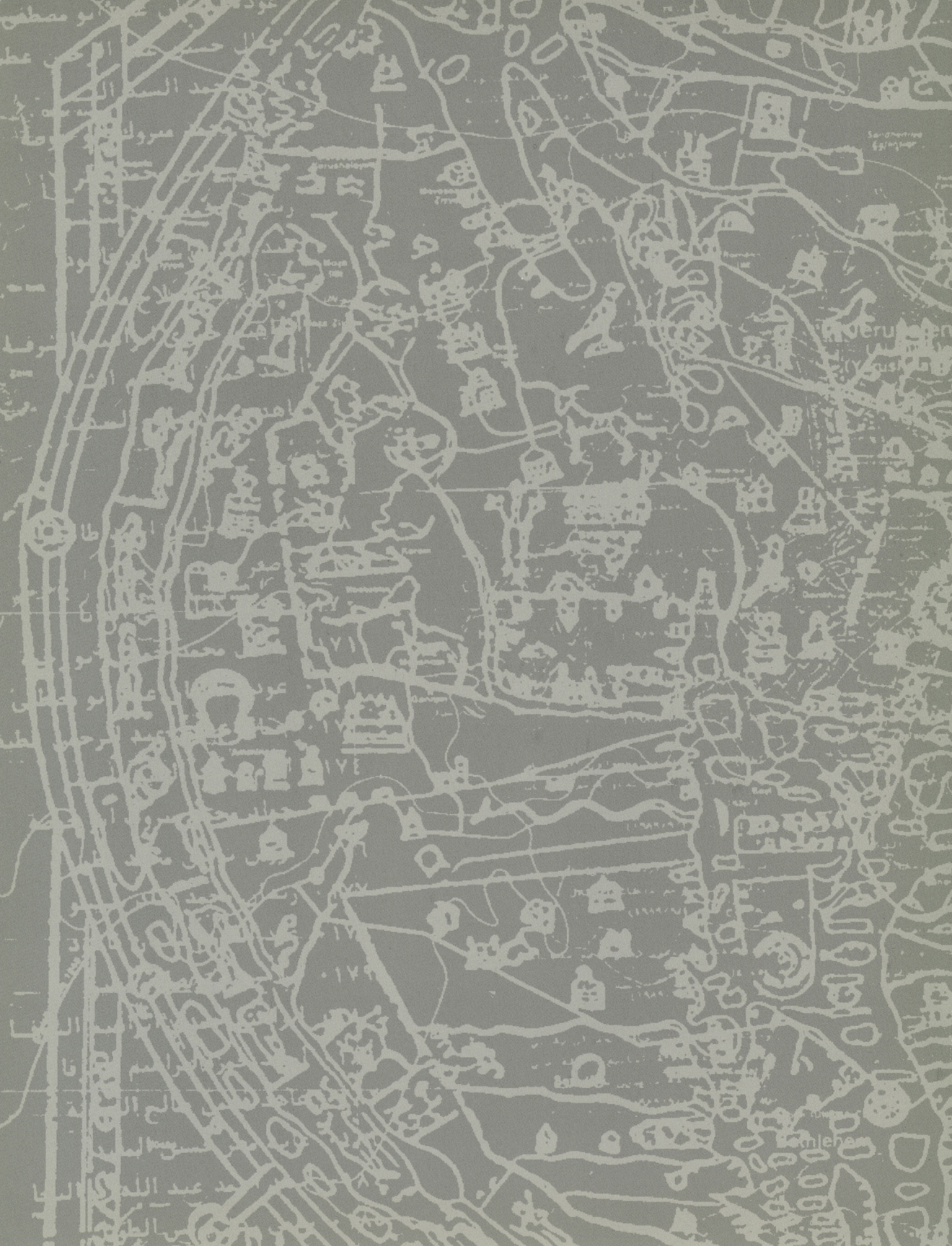


شرق من هنا

..east of here..

(re)imagining the 'orient'





شرقٌ من هنا

..east of here..

(re)imagining the 'orient'

curated by Jayce Salloum

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..east of here.. (upon arrival)

Jayce Salloum

(Re)imagining the orient.

I. Additional suggestions regarding the title.

To propose that the Orient is re-imagined invariably brings up the demand to point to whose Orient we are referring. For I would imagine that many oriental subjects simply live and think and continuously reinvent their Orient without the belief that every new 'imagining' of the place where they dwell needs to be defined or granted expression. If the Orient that is being re-imagined is the one that exists in relation to some fixed Orient, the Orient that participants in the exhibit and book are willing to challenge, then here again we would still need to define whose Orient is referenced. Is it a particular Western (European, American, French, German) construction? If so, which one? Why do we care about this particular construction? Why do we think it exists in the first place? We must be careful to proceed with an understanding that various distinct discourses overlap in the constructions of a variety of rapports between the US and Arabs, Arabs and Muslims. But

This project carries with it the burden of representation and time. In abundance and in lack, in lost time and failed time, in misrepresentation and immediate presence. What once we were never was and whatever we wanted to be couldn't, always being something to someone else, denied possibilities, and in this denial a little seizure, a little fissure here to explode a few concepts of our present and our present past. This project, this exigency that can't be expressed in so many words and these works, our works and these works and how they come to build a structure to face up to things. To face up to a history that is ours and never was, to develop a context for this face of history and to see it stop being what it was and continues to be.

As standing in for so many things, as standing with no precedent on shaky ground in and against, for and about, to meet up with this slow slide, this push against and thwarting this slide. To state this clearly would be to define where we stand in the midst of all this. And with this material we are clearly stating this, where we fall and stand in the midst of all this. As producers of objects and subjects, as consumers of ourselves and others, making available an interface with the material and materiality of this presence.

There are many languages here, even ones not recognized as such. There are many divisions all too often recognized as fragmented and contentious, separate and detached, denied the allowance of diversity as exists in composite cultures. Within this work as within these cultures there are different points of access, places of entry and engagement with the issues being addressed. The different audiences that this work expects, the variety of audiences, reveals its broaching of communities, its blurring of borders, its encroachment into territories of its own, territories denied and those claimed by it and by others. And in its delivery to us as viewers, the producers of this work present these layers that they identify with and against, or next to and as part of.

Neither the East nor the West are the monolithic entities that the other perceives. The artists in this show have traversed both regions, pockets of these regions that is, where they found themselves living and working, where their indigenous, diasporic or exilic situations have forced them, where their luxury of movement or their inability of such has been entrenched and where their subjective affinities have taken them. When their work arrives here, where do we put it and what do we name it, when the tangible realities are not immediately visible or when the political realities are received askew, when even the naming of it wreaks internal havoc and external bias, how can this work be perceived in the first place and subsequent to that? This is presupposed in the work itself and in its perspicacious nature of moving between style and substance, and between didacticism and the lyrical. This relationship, these points of contact found in and about these works, resonates with a precarious historical (un)/consciousness and a contemporary imperativeness. Positions created because of or in spite of the geo-political circumstances, the postcolonial and neocolonial forces at play here and abroad and the hegemony of pressurized thought which permeates any discussions on or of the relationship 'between' the Middle East and the West. So, immediately upon encountering such work we meet up with it and our refusal, of the work and histories that have been effaced, ideologies and strategies that have been refused and miscomprehended and the degree of encroachment that is allowed, the persuasion that is softened, the access denied. We are attached in this history, our lives and yours, this present state of being, a relationship that for better or worse has developed over time. The terms of this agreement are never quite clear enough, who are we engaging with, what is really at play here, these dynamics are at play, at work, and underline the space of alienation and familiarity of the work and its recipient.

The political, cultural and personal suturing taking place in the installations and media work led us to orchestrate this project as a web of concerns being bracketed by specific articulations of responses, each work encompassing several or a couple, each work playing off the next, each group synthesizing a focal point or arena of display. These works activate a range of perceptions, from a broad field of experiences, a field which

also that "while these discourses are heterogenous and unequal and do not correspond across national and cultural boundaries, they do overlap and are mutually implicated in one another at different moments." And this is precisely the thesis that makes possible the exhibit that is being considered. Proceeding from the above, will we consider how representations have in different ways and at different times related to expressions of domination and subordination (whose domination and whose subordination?) What is then the referent to each term, Orient and West, which inevitably does violence to the semiotic richness of the designated locale?

II. Notes on the book project.

The tendency in most academic writing and in most so-called 'Art Books/Artists' Books' has been to separate and privilege one or the other ways through which criticism is produced. Most academic writers tend to view visual contributions to criticism as diluted illustrations of critical theoretical writing. And most visual artists tend to treat academic writing as dense, alienating, and arrogant. This tendency inevitably always seeks to legitimate one system through which knowledge can be produced and disseminated.

I assume that in both the exhibit and the book project the focus will be on challenging both positions and seeking to find ways through which the limits and possibilities of producing critical knowledge are acknowledged and put to use. This initiative is motivated by a thorough rethinking of what it means to 'write, paint, image;' by, in other words, a critical understanding of what it means to 'produce meaning' through representations. Furthermore, the aim will be to be critically and historically informed as regards this effort; to its possibility without falling into some kind of fantastic space where no parameters guide what the exhibit and the book project intend to do. By this I bring up the notion of audience, the one(s) to whom this is addressed. This consideration should take into account the political, ideological, philosophical urgency of the project without falling into an arrogant determination of what and who an audience is.

Walid Ra'ad
1/1/95

when reduced negates aspects intrinsic to its complexity. Thus there is an unwieldiness to the number of works, the size of this show in relation to the pragmatics and space of its realization, but in this breadth, this collection of companion pieces, contradictory voices and battling formalities, is a type of representative sampling of the current state of 'art' production taking place in these connected centres and pockets and isolated areas that the practitioners are based.

What do we find when we arrive here; pointed inquiries, counter narratives, prosaic camouflage, cross directional and transgressive acts of production, constructions of sexuality, sites of projection and fantasy, mimicry, recuperation, appropriation and the reconstruction of the real, the imaginary and the undecided, private and public representations, manifestations of subjectivity. Imagine that and see where it leads you, imagine that and you can imagine this show in between and beyond, from here to elsewhere. An accounting of histories, 'Hawadeth' (the events), of the geo-political and the personal. The crossing/crossing over and out of genres, the collapse of 'art' and 'documentary,' critical interventions and individual and national(ist) acts of reconstruction. This project is sited here and there and in the movement between, between the 'West' and the 'East,' and 'East and West,' in these places labeled the 'Middle East,' 'West Asia,' the 'Arab World,' the 'Orient,' but it does not rest there at this cultural/political juncture/encounter and I hope it does not rest in the politics of identity where those acts are exclusive and overly determined in themselves. This is an attempt to remain rooted in the examination of the production of culture, the agency of such, the confines and interventionist alleys, the re-thinking and re-positioning of subjects and acts to defy, coerce, subvert, disclose, decenter, distress and resurrect, resurface, reconstruct and claim, not again but once, for this moment, first to state it and acknowledge the realities affected and aflamed.

To: salloum@igc.org (JS)
 From: Jen/falconer@utoronto.com (JK)
 Subject: initial ideas for a possible exhibition
 cc: Kamal
 Attachments: working notes

I'm in the midst of working on a film funded by a government film agency, which looks at questions of how representations of 'Arab' women have served Western interests at different historical periods, how these representations reflect back on the West, and how these representations have affected and continue to affect women's rights activists in the Middle East and North America. A key crew member thinks women who wear face veils with only their eyes showing are sexy. Another believes all Arabs hate Jews. The producer believes Arab men are more predisposed to violence than other men. The secretary, I am told, thinks the film should be about all those women who are locked in the house by their husbands. The script consultant thinks the film should really focus on honor killings and female genital mutilation. The filmmaker I meet in the cafeteria is doing a film on 'Islamic' women and warns me that this is her territory. The few who are supportive do not seem to have any power. Without exception most people I come into contact with deplore the seriousness of the oppression of 'Arab' women. The 'liberated' women who will populate the film are not considered representative enough. They are not complicit in their own subservience. They skirt around the triangular war zone where Arab men fight other Arab men in the name of 'honor,' where the colonialist fights the Arab in the name of civilization, and where the 'Western' feminist fights Arab or Muslim culture in the name of 'liberation.'

. . .

Egyptomania. The National Gallery of Canada's exhibit of orientalist art, furniture of all kinds, light fixtures held up by the naked bodies of Egyptian and Nubian women, fruit bowls on the heads of smiling savages. Vestiges of European fascination with an Orient fashioned as a dream, chaotic and sensual, catalyst of contradiction and excess. Visitors parade through the exhibition with the help of guides for whom Egypt and its people have as much substance as the clear plastic shower curtain with hieroglyphics being sold in the gallery souvenirs shop. Was the exhibit an effort

Orientalism is hegemonic not simply because it is a dominant idea to which people consent, but because it is a signifying force that is multiplied and reproduced in different texts and contexts to such a degree that it is not even recognizable as a separate entity; it is elaborated in the Gramscian sense and diffused in the culture at large. Elaboration means that the marking of the Orient as Other occurs on multiple levels (academic, political, epistemological, literary, cultural, moral), and that it is dispersed and continuous. When we think of this dissemination of Orientalism in culture at large, Said's work appears as truly archaeological in Foucault's sense, for it discovers an 'Orientalist Layer' in the production of the Western Subject, or 'Man,' the subject of humanism. In other words, if several different places are homogenized under the sign of the Orient, such a homogenization does not inscribe the Orient only; its inscription centers the West as the privileged or dominant pole of an epistemological and ontological opposition. This is exactly how Orientalist discourse is related to the Western hegemonic investment and the colonial/imperial apparatus of power that embodies it. The West constitutes itself as

universal and sovereign subject by marking the different as Other, and by thus dissimulating its forceful appropriation of peoples, lands and resources. Such a dissimulation is the symbolic violence of Orientalism as knowledge or truth of the Orient. ...we tend to forget that those whom we criticize (media, politicians, writers, other academics like ourselves) no longer even use the word 'Orient.' This is because the 'world' is already coded into the grand narrative of the West. This is the factual result of Orientalism which the United Nations empirically demonstrated in its practice, by legally sanctioning a violator to act as the law enforcer against another violator.

Mahmut Mutman, "Pictures from Afar: Shooting the Middle East," in Mahmut Mutman and Meyda Yegenoglu, eds., *Orientalism and Cultural Differences*, *Inscriptions* 6 (1992) : 3-4.

Land...because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, is recoverable at first only through the imagination.

Edward Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) p. 77.

by the State to subvert the fiction of a homogenized "West" or "East" untouched by one another? Or have the writers, painters and furniture designers of the colonial periods been replaced by their contemporaries — CNN, Corporation Z, Hollywood Inc. and the National Gallery of Canada. Perhaps one should be thankful that the exhibit accidentally pointed out some of the ways in which artists and art production have historically been involved in furthering state/institutional/colonial/political projects.

...

Up to the South. An exhibition curatorial meeting for a Toronto-based artist-run center. Jayce Salloum's video submission *Up to the South* is being reviewed. There are some loaded feelings and heated debate. A series of objections force themselves upon me, at first flirtatious and then persistent. Is it art? Or just documentary? Is it objective? What is the other side? The Israeli/Jewish version of this story? Association with Arab(ness) is something that is often seen to inherently threaten relations with Jewishness; Jew always synonymous with West and Arab/Muslim with East; Arab sometimes conflated with Muslim, Jew most often conflated with Europe, Israel and West, conflated historically between Britain, France and America. Underneath, a romanticized, essentialized notion of Jewishness that could turn on its head at a moment's notice. A series of fictions are left standing in order to deny the heterogeneous and contested sites of 'West,' 'East,' 'Arab,' or 'Jew.'

...

Bamboo Restaurant and bar in Toronto. Jayce Salloum and Julian Samuel are in town for a joint screening of their video works, presented by their distributor V Tape. I mention that I've talked to YYY Artists' Outlet and I'm interested in putting together an exhibit that deals with some of the issues raised in their work. We talk about what it means to decolonize cultural production. About the importance of situating debates concerning Orientalism, race and identity politics, within the context of Middle Eastern and North African nationalism and (post)colonial discourse. About identifying work that doesn't simply produce counter narratives to state(s)-sponsored propaganda which posits a dialectical East-West relationship, but reclaims and reconstructs geo-political histories which question the possibility of coherent identities. We decide to proceed with a project.



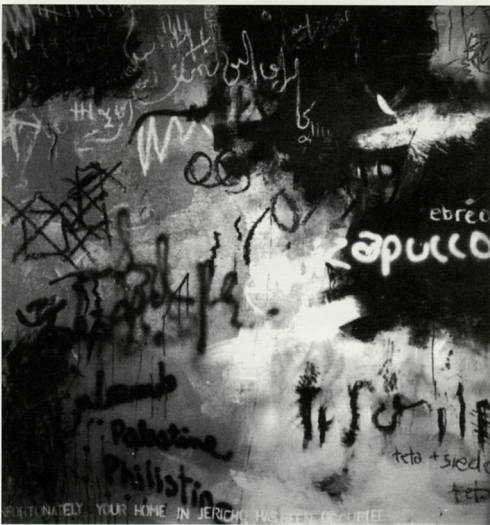
Finding Maps in Apricots

Laura U. Marks

Where to begin?

Begin with recent history, still trembling under a fresh layer of plaster? Or with the ancient histories, also buried, that underlie it?

With the languages eradicated and illegalized?¹ With the memories that persist despite official forgetting? So many of the works in *..east of here..* must find a place from which to begin to speak before they can speak. Some of them devote the whole work to a struggle to create that space. Pushing back curtain after curtain of official history, of words reinforced by guns and uniforms, of words reinforced by centuries of racist definitions from without and within. These works speak in all the languages they can muster, polemical and poetic, responsible and irresponsible — the howl of righteous anger, the extensive vocabulary of mourning, the deep belly laugh of joy in-spite-of. Many of these works — as the elliptical titles themselves suggest — exploit language to the point of uselessness, gleefully turning news-hour rhetoric into gibberish, splitting the hairs of language into a broad skein in which other patterns begin to form.



Where to begin also includes, where to look? The photo-journalists gaze avidly, earnestly, as though the truth can be fixed with the eyes. But nobody wants to look like a tourist. Even vision has already been occupied by others: the Hollywood films that set white stories in the ‘exotic Orient,’ the newscasts that depict the Middle East as a daily round of chaos. The camera, especially in an outsider’s hands, makes wounds in the scene: “Curiosity created a fissure, and I was the disorder, the opening that created the eye.”² So often in *..east of here..*,³ cameras point at

1 Vahap Avshar, *Sifir/Cipher*

2 Claire Dannenbaum, *the pupil of her hand in the palm of her eye*

3 Jayce Salloum and Elia Suleiman, *Muqaddimah Li-Nihayat Jidal (Introduction to the end of an argument) Speaking for oneself.../Speaking for others*; Yasmina Bouziane, *Le Regard*

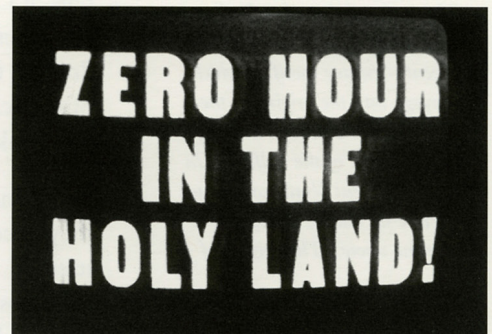
the ground rather than stare at their object, as though to reconstruct from the ground up a way to look at one's land and history.

Begin by attempting to destroy durable stereotypes, which spring right back up like a daruma doll?⁴ Or by flaunting those same images as too durable to be true? Or by hinting at a 'real' for the brief moment before it gets subsumed again to those signs? By insisting on the truth? Or by pulling away all the signifiers of truth? Some of the works in *..east of here..* reconstruct stories that have been missed or lied about in Western press and popular accounts.⁵ To explain the situation to outsiders, artists and activists turn to maps and hard evidence: jazzy graphics and animated phalanxes trace the disappearance of Palestine; lists of the dead, injured and dispossessed; United Nations resolutions 181, 242 and 338, which deal with the partition and occupation of Palestine; weary doctors peeling rubber bullets to reveal the lethal ball of steel inside.⁶

Yet in light of their official dismissal, the animated maps become cartoons, the evidence seems as light as leaves. Truth becomes a series of damned catalogues and useless maps. Some works in *..east of here..* reject attempts to establish a fundamental truth about the life of this region, instead looking at the many overlapping ways of telling, none the last word and none completely false. As in *Up to the South*, in which a number of Lebanese intellectuals and activists, framed like authoritative talking heads, rarely give straight answers to their interviewers' questions since whatever they say can be used to feed standard Western accounts of the Lebanese war.⁷

The effort to catalogue, denounce, refute atrocities and lies is a 'mise-en-abîme,' an endless series of stories framed by other stories: should we begin with the Geneva Convention and its daily defilements in occupied Palestine? Or with the Balfour Declaration of 1917? Or does it begin with expulsion of the Moors and Jews from Spain, a clear precedent for the 'cleansing' of Palestine and Bosnia?⁸ That leads us back to the myths connecting

The Orient as a metaphor for sexuality is encapsulated by the recurrent figure of the veiled woman. The inaccessibility of the veiled woman, mirroring the mystery of the Orient itself, requires a process of Western unveiling for comprehension. Veiled women in Orientalist paintings, photographs, and films expose flesh, ironically, more than they conceal it. It is this process of exposing the female Other, of literally denuding her, which comes to allegorize the Western masculinist power of possession, that she, as a metaphor for her land, becomes available for Western penetration and knowledge. This intersection of the epistemological and the sexual in colonial discourse echoes Freud's metaphor of the 'dark continent.' Freud speaks of female sexuality in metaphors of darkness and obscurity often drawn from the



4 An egg-shaped toy with a weight in its base, aka 'Weebles.'

5 David Thorne, *Men in the News #29: War Memorial*, and others looking back at the Gulf War

6 *Muqaddimah Li-Nihayat Jidal*; Tom Hayes, *People and the Land*

7 Jayce Salloum + Walid Ra'ad, *Up to the South*

8 Julien Samuel, *Into the European Mirror*

realms of archeology and exploration — the metaphor of the ‘dark continent,’ for example, deriving from a book by the Victorian explorer Stanley... .

David Macey’s suggestion that psychoanalysis posits femininity as being in excess of its rationalist discourse, and then complains that it cannot explain it, is equally applicable to the positing of the Other in colonial discourse.

Furthermore, Freud uses the language of force; for example, “we force our way into the internal strata, overcoming resistances at all times.” Looking at the Eastern roots of civilizations, Freud employs ancient myths and figures such as the Sphinx and Oedipus to draw parallels between the development of the civilization and that of the psyche. ...

The interweaving of archeology and psychoanalysis touches on a nineteenth-century motif in which the voyage into the origins of the Orient becomes a voyage into the interior colonies of the ‘self.’ (“Un voyage en Orient [était] comme un grand acte de ma vie intérieure,” Lamartine wrote.) The origins of

land ownership with whiteness: the eradication of blackness and brownness from Europe; the effort to redefine the Jew as white, as Ashkenazi, in the establishment of Israel as a European settlement.⁹ Yet the definition of who is black is shifty, and the hysterical fear of blackness is not unique to white people. A stately black woman endures the racist slurs of her fellow Armenians; but it is she who reveals the magical power of a cup of thick, sweet Armenian coffee to the young witness of this scene.¹⁰ In a humorous scene, the Egyptian actor Bassam Samra auditions for a shampoo commercial. Here too, media images project an idealized image of whiteness, which the handsome dark actor is required to simulate: “Tell them it makes your hair smooth.” “Smooth?” “Maybe you should get your hair straightened,”¹¹ goes the exchange between actor and assistant director.

The great global flows of capital, empire, and empire’s blue-suited son, corporate diplomacy, cross and recross the Middle East, pulling local life into global patterns. Perhaps they are the movements of “the three largest world trades,” in weapons, drugs, and religion.¹² Works in *..east of here..* trace these giant flows: the massive one-way border crossings of emigration and exile — and people who cannot move, prohibited to return to their own occupied land. The movement of labour — and labour that cannot move, Palestinian workers blockaded from their jobs. The ever-optimistic industry reps. at Cairo’s industrial fair herald the global flow of goods, while consumers carry away imported plastics¹³ — and the goods that cannot flow: in the embargo after the Gulf war, Iraqi hospitals are empty of medicine, bandages and milk. An Iraqi infant, a tiny, fragile thing too weak to cry, dies two days after video captures its image.¹⁴

At times these global movements seem to reconfigure everything they encounter into their own forms of money and power. Yet the strength of many of these works lies in their ability to track the most abstract movement to its most localized effect: while Israeli soldiers hold up the Palestinian ambulance at the checkpoint, a woman in labour gives birth to stillborn twins,¹⁵ while their husbands

9 b.h. Yael, *Fresh Blood*

10 Tina M. Bastajian, *Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language That Avoids Her*

11 Yousry Nasrallah, *On Boys, Girls, and the Veil*

12 *Into the European Mirror*

13 Hossam Ali, *The Fair*

14 Jon Alpert, *Saddam Speaks*

15 *People and the Land*

are far away, 'guest workers' in Germany, women in Eastern Turkey tend their goats and keep company with each other.¹⁶ Local life cannot be contained by global and national maps, even when it is forced to define itself within them. Along the same wires that carry international financial transfers, syndicated news wires and military information, virtual prayers are flowing; they burst into life on a faraway screen or innocently reduce to ASCII code.¹⁷ Where there are people, life is always erupting. "Islam is about joy, not renunciation," Bassam says, as a laughing, dancing crowd of men and veiled women enjoys the Mulid's devotional songs.¹⁸

One of the clearest ways in which outsiders' and insiders' maps of the Islamic world overlap is in the many functions of that most volatile sign, the veil. Still coded in the West as (barely) hiding dangerous, voluptuous flesh,¹⁹ considered by Western feminists to clearly represent the wholesale oppression of women, its meanings in Islamic countries are far less stable. According to the young women in *On Boys, Girls and the Veil*, the veil is anything but a sign of women's self-deception. One of its meanings is concealment, protecting men from the sight of a woman. But a sign whose meaning is concealment can conceal many things. The sign of virtue quickly shifts, signifying other things: shopping for a designer veil, Bassam's younger sister, Hind, discusses how women choose veils to complement their looks, to be signs of elegance and worldly chic.²⁰ Elsewhere it is suggested that veiled women are the most powerful agents of terror precisely because, to outsiders, the veil signifies submission and invisibility.²¹ Finally, the veil as 'orientalist drag': in photos that mock colonial fantasy postcards, Yasmina Bouziane tests the power of the veil to impose its meaning over the most outlandish getups.²²

Especially for exiles, when official maps of the Middle East

16 Claire Dannenbaum, *Haji: (drinking from the stream)*

17 Thibaud Béghin, *Virtual Prayers*

18 *On Boys, Girls and the Veil*

19 Yasmina Bouziane, *Ali Baba*

20 *On Boys, Girls, and the Veil*

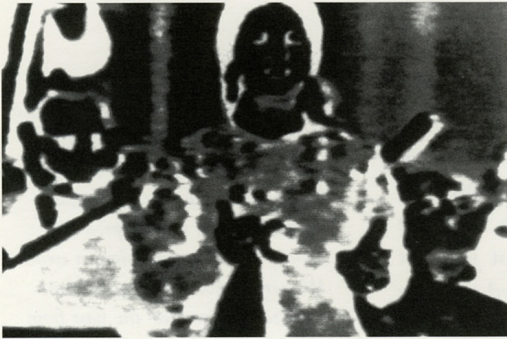
21 Isaac Julien, *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask* (in footage from *The Battle of Algiers*, women conceal weapons under their chadoras); Mitra Tabrizian, *The Third Woman*

22 Yasmina Bouziane, photographs from the installation, *Inhabited by Imaginings We Did Not Choose*

archeology, the search for the 'roots of civilization' as a discipline are, we know, inextricably linked to imperial expansionism. In the cinema, the Indiana Jones series reproduces exactly this colonial vision in which Western 'knowledge' of ancient civilizations 'rescues' the past from oblivion. It is this masculinist rescue in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* that legitimizes denuding the Egyptians of their heritage, confining it within Western metropolitan museums — an ideology implicit in the orientalist *Intolerance*, *Cleopatra*, and the



Mummy series. (These films, not surprisingly, tend to be programmed in museums featuring Egyptological exhibitions.) *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, symptomatically, assumes a



disjuncture between contemporary and ancient Egypt, since the space between the present and the past can 'only' be bridged by the scientist. The full significance of the ancient archeological objects within the Eurocentric vision of the Spielberg film is presumed to be understood only by the Western scientists, relegating the Egyptian people to the role of ignorant Arabs who happen to be sitting on a land full of historical treasures — much as they happen to 'sit' on oil. Set in the mid-thirties when most of the world was still under colonial rule, the film regards the colonial presence in Egypt as completely natural, eliding a history of Arab nationalist revolts against foreign domination.

Ella Habiba Shohat, "Gender and the Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema," in Hamid Naficy and Leshone H. Gabriel, eds., *Ethnography of the Imagined and the Image: Otherness and the Media*, (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991) p. 57-59.

become useless, other things must count as maps. We might begin, as many of these works do, with home movies, dear old photographs, indexes of ordinary lives that now seem impossibly distant.²³ In Emily Jacir's paintings, bright apricots seem to condense the Mediterranean sun, even as their blurry outlines suggest the softness of memory.²⁴ The seventeen objects a divorced woman brings with her, from Palestine to Lebanon to Jordan and Sierra Leone, encode memories, years of witness for better

or worse. Meanwhile, her ex-husband has his own memory objects: he spends his days rearranging his son's bullet collection, as though the right combination would make sense of his past.²⁵ Another memory object familiar to all exiles from this region is the singing of Umm Kulthoum. Kulthoum as a representation of the Arab nation is deeply ironic, as her powerful voice is a reminder of the 1967 defeat, her association with Nasser and blame for "numbing the masses." Her image, reduced almost to an abstract pattern by the tenth-generation images on a TV screen, calls up bittersweet and conflicting memories.²⁶

So we might begin by looking at the maps inscribed in material things, concrete maps:²⁷ the Moorish architecture of Spain is witness to an Arabic cultural presence in Europe a thousand years ago, while the damaged buildings of Beirut are a map of more recent events. Scars are certainly maps, but you have to know how to read them. They may be evidence of survival and new life, like the deep childbearing scars on a woman's belly. She strokes them again and again, as though coaxing them to speak. Scars are like windows, Roula Haj-Ismaïl says; bodies and spaces are interconnected in a dense, sensual network. Just as the marks on her own body are evidence of her contact with the world, the open doors and windows in her city allow the lives of its inhabitants to flow into each other.²⁸

Global forces are also mapped on the psyche. The response of madness, as Jalal Toufic suggests, may be diagrammatic rather than

23 Akram Zaatari, *Home: Abdel Halim* and many other works use family photographs and movies.

24 Emily Jacir, *Mish-Mish & Ah-id*

25 Walid Ra'ad, *Missing Lebanese Wars*

26 Sami Al-Kassim, *Far From You*

27 *Into the European Mirror*; Jalal Toufic, *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*; Cynthia Madansky, *Things to See/Places to Stay*

28 Roula Haj-Ismaïl, *I Wet My Hands Etched and Surveyed Vessels Approaching Marks Eyed Inside*

psychotic.²⁹ Frantz Fanon quit his practice in Algeria because the psychoses of his patients, both those who were tortured and the torturers, were the sign of a colonial structure and not amenable to his treatment.³⁰ Everyday fear produces madness, in the form of forgetting to live in the present: a Beirut woman runs for groceries during a lull in the shelling, her shoe falls off, she keeps running.³¹ But *..east of here..* has its share of psycho-linguists, artists who use madness as a strategy of clairvoyance. Madness is another map; it is the logic when all logical structures work to destroy the places where self is made — the old olive grove, the beloved sons and daughters.

With luck, a lucid schizophrenia discovers new truths, new ways of being. Some works in *..east of here..* let bruised, fractured language rest, they turn to something that slips beyond language. They find life telescoped into an apricot, into the scars on one's stomach, in rhythm, in melody. Gazing long enough at a screen full of static, while you listen to an Arabic pop song, the black-and-white dots dance into the pattern of a 'kefiya'.³² They find life telescoped into texture and colour. Waxen heads, seemingly painted with the body's own precious substances, seem to suck the viewer in through their tactile surface, appealing to wordless bodily memories.³³ Shirin Kazemi's intense gem-pigmented figures bring Persian memories of colour into a diasporan present.³⁴

These local maps, these speaking objects, the songs and colours and textures that contain a thousand stories, surge up against the flow of global movements of power. *..east of here..* makes its beginnings from many directions, all dependent on each other, none reducible to the others. To refute the official stories about this region, whether Western or nationalist; to unravel the conditions of speech that enable those stories; and finally to find expression in the most intimate of places. *..east of here..* begins to describe a new map in some unforeseen medium, a map that is four-dimensional, ever fluid, and volatile as perfume.

29 Jalal Toufic, statement for *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*

30 Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Mask*

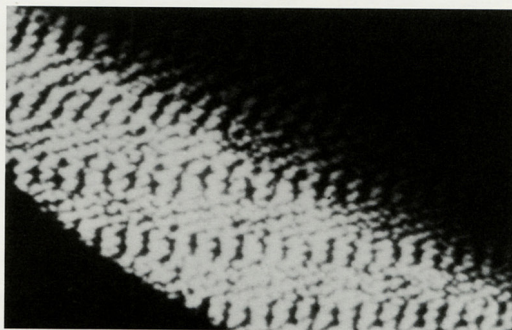
31 Ghazi Abdel-Baki, *Hawadeth*

32 Pia Reunala, *Signal*

33 Mireille Kassir, *Ami (Friends)*

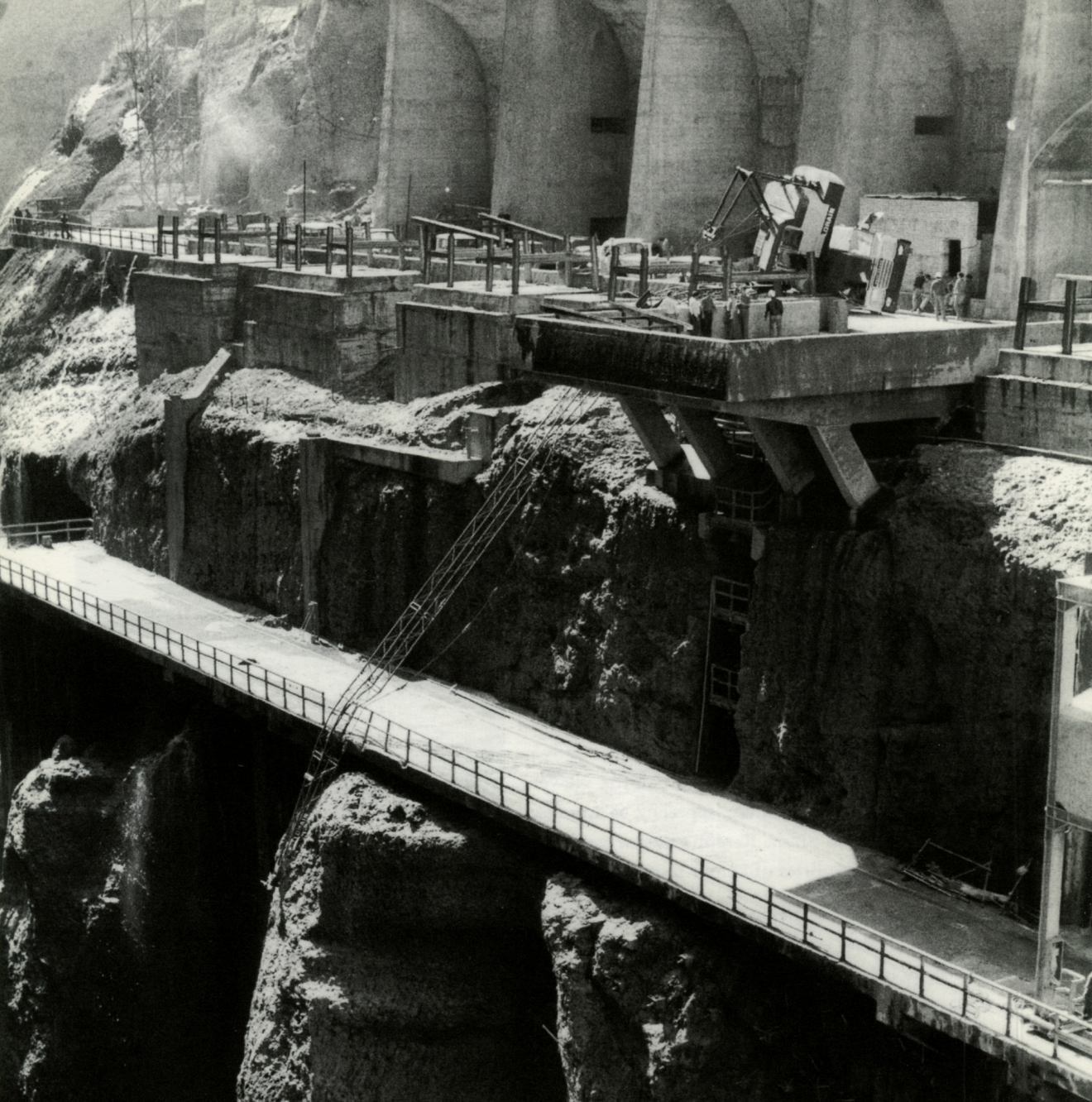
34 Shirin Kazemi, *She's All Dried Up, Dream, Seascape, etc.*

Even though the East endured a great deal of criticism and harsh scrutiny, its 'weakness' was simultaneously romanticized because...it was neatly packaged to the Western reader/explorer as a mystery and a 'secret' to unravel. Unbeknown to the West, it in turn exposed its own 'secrets' through its relationship with the East. ...the 'Orient' functioned as a safe location for the West to



unlock its Victorian sexuality and it became an abstract location whereby it could mediate its confessions.

Dina Georgis, "The Feminization of the East: An Historical Look at the Impact of Western Patriarchy on Orientalism," diss., U of Toronto, 1996.



estan means place

VO (by telephone): *My father was an advisor to the Khuzestan Water and Power Authority. He was an engineer, an electrical engineer I believe. That was his forte — water and power.*

MV (tel): ... And I don't know how he found the job in Iran, but he found people who were looking for his expertise and ... it was a company called Development & Resources which was doing some extensive development in terms of hydroelectric dams, and reforestation, and planting of certain crops, and basically agricultural uses for the water and for the electricity.

sv: It was agricultural *and* hydroelectric, right?



MV (tel) : Well, actually the hydroelectric developed the electricity needed and the by-product was the water. You build the dam and it holds the water and when you let the water out it runs the turbine that makes electricity, it also is used for ... what is it called when you water in a controlled way ... irrigation.

the veil

VO: *If I find myself in history I cannot help but find myself in the colonialist father. What has always been his story scuttles its defense, a model with no maker. But if I am in I might also be of. What produces me I've known only through this language which has already forgotten the violence it brings, has already said before I get there "its alright, everything will be alright."*

MV (tel): Oh yea, there was a movement going on all the time against the Shah, and he basically strong armed and sent the Imam ... he exiled him because he was a troublemaker. I mean the Shah used force — there's no question.

SV: Did you ever hear about things he had done, or Savak?

MV (tel): No, we didn't hear much about it. All we knew was you didn't talk about the Shah, you didn't make nasty remarks about him. You watched what you had to say.

SV: Did you realize how closely associated the Shah was with the United States?

VV (tel): I think so, because his government had invited us to come over and ... help them. I recall ... I felt a sense of ... friendliness.



Material Visions

Marwan Hassan

Shatiba, Játiva, San Felipe

In October 1238 the Spanish crusader army of Jaume I pushed through Sharkh al-Andalus and captured the city of Balansiya. Between 1244 and 1252 Jaume consolidated his control over the manufacturing city of Shatiba, also know as Játiva or Xativa (San Felipe in Spanish). The capture of Játiva was not a minor event in the reconquest of Andalusia, or in Jaume the Conqueror's campaign to construct the "Crusader Kingdom of Valencia."¹ Control of this city in the heart of Islamic Valencia was not only integral to the emergence of Spain but also played a crucial role in the exchange and development of technology and economic relations of culture production. For Játiva was not just any Moorish city of al-Andalus but the foremost papermaking centre of the western Mediterranean.² The production of paper in Játiva was a monopoly of the Muslim papermakers and would remain so under Jaume even as the Moors were transformed into Mudejars.

Despite the fact that parchment and vellum were preferred throughout Europe for writing and keeping records, Jaume decided to use the Játivan paper in the state registers. This marked a revolution in the administration of the state apparatus, and ultimately it would influence the production of knowledge, cultural production, writing and printing.³

One of my aims here is to re-orient the contradictions between economics and culture (both material and intellectual) and the intermeshing of these two modes of production. Papermaking did not just appear in Europe because Marco Polo made a tour of China: Muslim Arab and Berber craftworkers were integral to the transfer of knowledge, technique and technology. And here it is not a case of highlighting the religious or national origins of the craftworkers involved, but rather emphasizing their role in the economic and cultural life of Europe. In short, these Andalusian papermakers were cultural workers.



Beirut 1978-1982

In March 1978, the Israeli military, after several years of shelling Lebanon, launched a major military operation into south Lebanon which culminated in a second more extensive invasion led by General Ariel Sharon in June 1982 that brought the Israeli military into the outskirts of Beirut.⁴ Both Israeli invasions contributed substantially to the destruction of the economy of Lebanon and had extreme consequences on the cultural life of the entire region. Over and above the destruction from bombing, the Israeli army seized and in some cases destroyed much of Lebanon's cultural infrastructure, as well as the archives of the Palestinians and other cultural works, sites, records and artifacts, in violation of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954.⁵ The Israeli forces displaced and coerced the transfer and removal of the civilian populations, both Lebanese and Palestinian. Despite the civil war, Beirut had sustained a dynamic cultural production and economic life which the Israeli state wished to appropriate and ultimately integrate into the Israeli economic power structure.



Where it was not able to achieve such appropriations, the Israeli state attempted either to neutralize or negate both Lebanese and Palestinian production in Lebanon. Similar tragic events have created refugees or exiles of other peoples of the region including the south Sudanese peoples, Armenians, Kurds and Berbers.

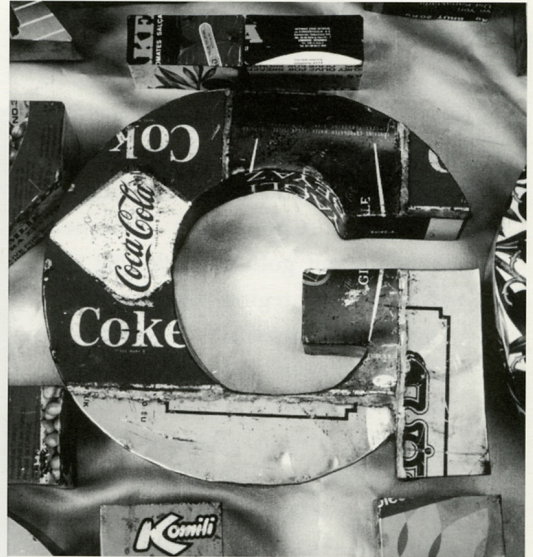
From refugees to transnational workers

These various peoples forced into refugee status through political and military conflicts have been transformed into several types of workers — migrant, itinerant, exiled, displaced, removed — in the world economy. In short, transnational workers engaged in either intellectual or manual labour have emerged. And subsequent to the first or second displacement such refugees as guest workers have been expelled, deported or had their visas withdrawn by their host countries.⁶ They have less freedom and mobility than the capital which determines their rates of pay, movements across borders and sites of work. The artists of this region whether resident there or in the diaspora, as so many in *...east of here...*, are as often as not subject to such physical disruptions in their lives.

The global economy arrives in the region marking out at least two significant contradictions between capital and labour. The first contradiction exists within capital, between its scarcity (for the purposes of making art) and the excess of capital (from oil revenues) which bleeds out of the region through the transnational petroleum companies and the

squandering by the Middle Eastern elites. The second contradiction exists between the waves of refugees created by military conflicts and the restrictions on free movement of citizens by the various states in the name of national security.

It would be naive to imagine that such widespread unemployment and underemployment in most countries of the region would not have consequences for cultural workers, whether in the diaspora or still residing in the region. Evidence for such changes in the lives of cultural workers does not have to be analyzed in terms of economic determinism: marshalling an absolute body of facts against a fixed body of representative works of art. Rather, we can discern the evidence of such contradictions between capital and labour in the various works of art in technique, method, narration, voice, ideology, theme, genre, form, ideational content, subject matter, *etc.* However, two crucial developments can be highlighted with respect to the culture industry. First, the categories of ideology, authoritarianism and neo-orientalism; second, the channels of access and distribution.⁷



Authoritarianisms and neo-orientalism

There exists not one authoritarianism exclusive to any one people, nation or religion, but rather an ensemble of authoritarianisms, sometimes in direct contradiction with one another, and at other times reinforcing one another even while appearing as a result of state propaganda to be in competition or conflict. Some have their sources in nationalism, others in religion, some in epiphanic mythologies of ethnic origins, others in the presumption of race, some in elitist notions of culture, others in sexism, and several in personality cults.⁸ Khomeinism, Maronite chauvinism, Saudi fundamentalism, and ultra orthodox Jewish fundamentalism, in fact, share much in common with one another in their repressive power relations, despite apparent contradictions at the nation-state threshold or nominal differences in religious dogma.

None of these authoritarianisms exists in solitude. In as much as they are internal growths within their respective societies, they are external correlatives of neo-orientalism. Cultural or religious struggles sometimes are surrogates, more polemical and rhetorical in character, for power struggles over economics, technology-science and politics, betraying the economic weaknesses of the dependent societies.⁹

Neo-orientalism has emerged as a force in the era of decolonization and is linked to the global cultural industries. Capital has discerned much latent gold in exploiting the Middle East region with its warehouse of cultural associations, images, objects and affiliations. For these societies a potential form of capital resides in culture, a resource analogous to the physical raw resources which need to be acted upon to extract the capital. The cultural resources are not fossilized in a geological formation (like oil or coal) but rather within geographical,



archaeological or historical strata ('Pharaonic Egypt,' 'The Holy Land' or 'Promised Land,' 'Mesopotamia.') In the global economy, commodification of these cultures stands as a necessity of capital itself, creating a further loop in the circulation-distribution-consumption of works of culture as both commodity and knowledge.

However arguable Edward Said's work *Orientalism* is, it registered as a fault line in the field of Orientalism, and is one of the few works of criticism which possessed enough engagement to pass over from the domain of theory into the realm of action. No doubt it was this capacity for stimulating action that made the work and its author vulnerable. It also made apparent that although there were Orientalists and a discipline called Orientalism, there were no such entities as the 'orient' or 'orientals.' Although Said's work is obviously not of an economic character, it nevertheless implicitly touched on the relations between knowledge and production, technological dependency and the depletion of capital from the region. We should not lose sight of the fact that the Middle East region itself is the site of one of the most significant drains of money in economic history, at risible rates of return and benefit to the indigenous peoples. Hence *Orientalism* indirectly marked out the generalized poverty of theories concerning the region.

The unearthing of this older form of Orientalism has resulted in a reconfiguration of Orientalism itself into what I loosely term 'neo-orientalism,' which establishes its reciprocal coefficient in the practice of the local authoritarianisms. Both the authoritarianisms of the Middle East and the intellectual authoritarianism of 'neo-orientalism,' however, share in common the attribute and the will to speak from authority itself and to author the world (however illusionary) for Kurds, Arabs, Turks or Muslims and, more recently, various Christian Arab groups such as Maronites or Copts.

Access and distribution

Middle Eastern artists whether in the diaspora or still living in the region cannot simply be classified as 'marginal.' This term conceals the complex and contradictory relations they may have with themselves, their own societies, their production or the nations to which they have migrated.

What we see is that these cultural workers have relatively restricted access to capital. Even if they are able to negotiate around the problem of access through innovation — in techniques, inventions of the self, collectivities, productive barter, exchanges of skills or labour — such innovations can only take them and their art works so far into the global economy. The repressive state mechanisms of their own nations or hostility from Western states and societies may restrict access or deny them distribution, or cut off their art production from audiences or consumers. In the worst case, the state engages in outright repression, censorship, torture and assassination.

But if these are sometimes the artists' circumstances internally, the situation after migration or exile is not significantly improved, as they are tainted by the presumptions of terrorism, religious stereotypes and generally limited access to advanced methods and channels of distribution and access to markets. The artist of the Middle East is a transnational cultural figure in the global economy but has no access to any transnational corporation possessing the power or will to mediate his or her works of art. Sometimes outsiders have a perception of contemporary cultural impoverishment in contradiction with a presumed rich legacy of antiquities. But it is not the imagination of the artist or the production of contemporary art that is impoverished so much as the means of circulation and distribution, and the consequent restraints on access and consumption, each of which, depending on magnitude, tends either to legitimate or delegitimize a work of art in the eyes of consumers or viewers. The more extensive the distribution-consumption, the more the work is endowed with prestige, status and power, and therefore merits viewing. Little transnational distribution, circulation and access of their cultural works occur: they are melted down in the furnace of capital to what can be commodified by the forces of transnational media corporations which negate, deny or buy out the possibility of distribution, while the residue is dumped as slag. The art work is reduced to the exchange value of a base commodity. This results in North Americans having a nostalgic interest in the ancient artifacts of the culture but little interest in the art production of contemporary Middle East artists.

Egypt could once claim a robust domestic film and recording industry, largely sustained by internal consumption in Egypt and within the larger region. Musicians such as Umm Kulthoum achieved world recognition (except in North America). Beirut and Cairo were important publishing and distribution centres — less so now. Relatively



speaking, in the aggregate Middle East cultures have less capacity to enter the global exchange process. If the Middle Eastern artist's work is reduced to a competing commodity because of the peripheral status of the region within the world system, so too is the cultural worker reduced to a competing artist with all the attendant vulnerabilities. The prestige accumulated around the ancient artifacts or even the urgency of military conflicts should not be conflated with economic relations and therefore construed to be representative of the power of contemporary artists. The fact is that few if any contemporary Middle Eastern artists can command influence over the transnationals which dominate cultural production in the world system.

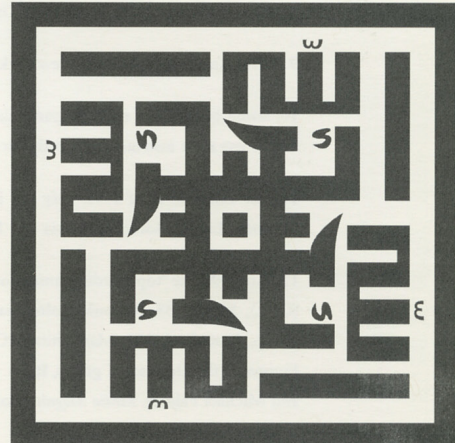
On the one hand, Middle East states (except possibly Israel)¹⁰ are too economically enervated to protect the intellectual property rights of cultural workers through the legal mechanisms of international trade agreements (GATT, World Trade Organization, Berne Convention, Universal Copyright Convention, *etc.*) In some cases the countries are not even signatories to such regulatory agreements (feeble as the protection might be.)¹¹ On the other hand, none of the major transnational media corporations is owned by capitalists of the region. Hence unlike Japan or Europe or North America, there is hardly any corporate participation in the international media trade.¹² Even in Israel, Conrad Black's Hollinger has bought out the *Jerusalem Post*. Neither can the historical cultural legacy, however enticing, lubricate the means of access and distribution for contemporary artists. The Middle East has been increasingly one of the major exporters of cultural and intellectual workers to the rest of the world. In many cases such migrating workers are not only seeking an income or improvement in their standard of living but circulation of their very ideas and works of art. Consequently, not only is the cultural work caught in the world economy as a mere commodity but the cultural worker also becomes another object in the exchange process of knowledge, artifact, language and commodities.

Peripheral to this equation is the geographical transmigration of Disney into the European landscape.¹³ Euro-Disney seeks not only to export North American cultural commodities to Europe (in effect dumping American cultural commodities into the European market) but also to penetrate the geographically proximate markets of Africa and Western Asia. Euro-Disney is a logical materialist extension of Voice of America's propaganda, its commodities the incarnation of radio speech. The vectors of exchange are not solely the distribution of military hardware,¹⁴ creating technological dependency and sustaining the exploitation of oil, but also the contradictions of cultural commodities. A passing familiarity with any middle class Middle Eastern household reveals the antinomy

of western kitsch displacing and standing as barrier to distribution of the region's own cultural production. (It is not Yussef Chahin versus Louis Malle but the absurdity of Yussef Chahin forced into competition with Disney's *Aladdin*, or reruns of *Bonanza* or *Dallas*.) One might also note the obligatory shopping trips to Paris, Rome or London by the economic elite or intellectuals sometimes desperate for cultural objects (videos, cameras), but as often as not for the prestige associated with the phrase "I bought it in Paris..."

Ultimately what these phenomena mark out is that if between 750 and 1300 the Middle East was the site of advanced production of paper, steel, armaments, glass, ceramics and textiles, where workers shared in the production and development of technology and culture, the same cannot be said of today's workers. Just as the common worker of the region suffers unemployment or underemployment, or works as migrant or guest worker for very low wages, the cultural worker experiences the weight of rejection and denied access to the more vigorous methods of distribution of cultural works. The outflow of raw resources as commodities and the economic rootlessness of the transnational workers from the region reflect the incapacity of peoples to control their own production in several sectors while the illusion is that the authoritarian elites are in control.

The remarkable thing is that the many artists of the region, through improvisation, innovation, collaboration with one another, invention, sheer political nerve, and raw courage are able to come up with works of art. The Israeli security apparatus can assassinate Ghassan Kanafani;¹⁵ Saudi Arabia can strip Abdulrahman Munif of his Arabian citizenship; the Turkish and Iraqi state can hound Kurdish journalists; and Iran can repress dissident artists but such intimidation and violence do not bring a halt to cultural production. Rather such actions reveal the repressive mechanism of the security apparatus of the state and the bankruptcy of certain nation-building projects.



Acknowledgements:

I am indebted to Catherine Shepherd for her many substantive suggestions and attentive editing. I would also like to thank Jayce Salloum for several suggestions for the revision of this article.

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1. See Mahmoud Makki, "The Political History of al-Andalus (92/711-897/1492)" in Salma Khadra Jayyusi, (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, (Leiden, 1992), pp. 76-77; and Robert I. Burns, *Diplomatarium of Crusader Kingdom of Valencia, The Registered Charters of its Conqueror Jaume I, 1257-1276*, Vol. I, *Society and Documentation in Crusader Valencia*, (New Jersey, 1985), pp. 4-6, 120, 155-58.

2. Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, (New Jersey, 1984), pp.54-67.

3. Burns, pp. 151-81.

4. See Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*, (Cambridge, 1979). Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War*, (Oxford, 1990). Sean McBride *et al.*, *Israel in Lebanon: The Report of the International Commission to enquire into reported violations of International Law by Israel during its invasion of the Lebanon*, (London, 1983). Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon*, (New York, 1987).

5. Israel ratified this convention in 1956 and Lebanon in 1957. For details see Sean McBride *et al.*, pp. 196-97.

6. Yemenis, Palestinians, Sudanese, Egyptians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Kurds, Armenians, Turks, and Berbers have all been expelled or had their visas withdrawn 'en masse' for economic or political reasons by various countries such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Germany, France and Kuwait.

7. A third and equally important development in the zone of theory concerning the control and transfer of technology, and especially computational culture, is a subject to be addressed in detail in a future article.

8. This last group is most complex and would include political and military figures such as V. Jabotinsky, the Gemayels, father and sons, Musa Sadr, G. Nasser, Ghadhafi, H. Assad, Y. Arafat, Hasan al-Banna, M. Dyan, D. Ben Gurion, M. Begin, A. Sharon, Barzani, Talabani, H. Tourabi, ibn Saudi clan, Khomeini, S. Hussein, M. Kahani, B. Netanyahu and many others of lesser power and status.

9. Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, (New York, 1989) pp.124-35; also *Empire of Chaos*, (New York, 1992).

10. Some of the Gulf states, in particular Saudi Arabia, have invested in international media corporations located in Europe. The Saudis use such instruments mostly for religious propoganda or to defend their conservative economic policies.

11. For example as of 1992 only the following Middle East countries are signatories to the Berne Convention: Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. See Lesley Ellen Harris, *Canadian Copyright Law*, (Toronto, 1992), pp. 246-47.

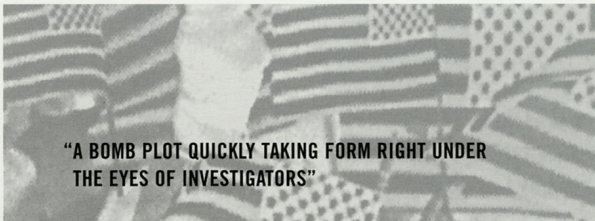
12. Roughly, the 'top' media transnationals circa 1990 might be considered to be Time-Warner (USA), General Electric-RCA (USA), Sony-CBS Records-Columbia Pictures (Japan), Bertelsmann AG (Germany), News Corporation (Rupert Murdoch group, Australia-USA), Matsushita-MCA (Japan), Fujisankei (Japan), Hachette (France), Maxwell Communications (Britain), Fininvest (the Berlusconi group, Italy). See Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, 4th ed., (Boston, 1992) and Jeremy Tunstall and Michael Palmer, *Media Moguls*, (London, 1991).

13. See Bagdikian, p. 24. Disney is part of the corporation Buena Vista Films.

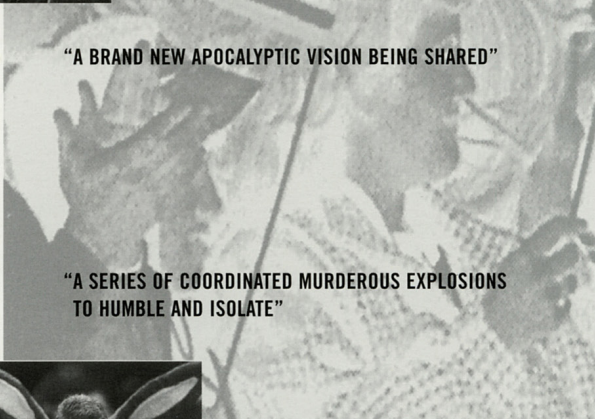
14. Bagdikian pp. 241-42. See also Jeremy Tunstall and Michael Palmer, pp. 154-58. The French transnational media corporation Hachette is linked through its chairman Jean-Luc Lagardère to France's armaments manufacturer, Matra group. Robert Maxwell also appears to have been linked with the armaments industry through his media empire. How many other media transnationals have such linkages is an area worth investigating.

15. Petran, p. 144.

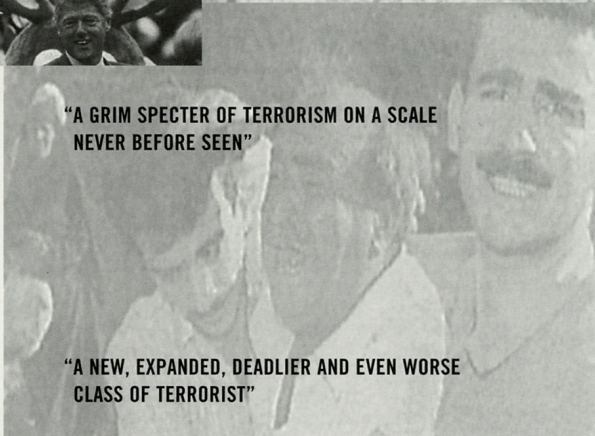
There's a sleight of hand that takes place across your eyes the minute you notice the present making an idiot lie of the past you've worked so hard to put together, when some war you cheered as over and done is blowing up in your face and you have to scramble to slam the lid back on it again. It's no small trick to recognize people you've never seen before screaming at you and in the same instant make them vanish – it's just like the trick that takes place across your ears and shuts them up but good, the trick that muffles everything save for the deafening kindness of self-explanations, the unconvincing disbelief that anyone could have it in for you, that you should be the one under the gun, the sweet-talking moral obligations that force you to show how a bombing's done properly, done with *class* by blasting a nobody into screaming the scream that would be your own if some bungling amateurs ever met with success. And this is no small trick either, to scream loudest of all but always out of other mouths so you never have to make a sound – it's just like the sleight of hand that takes place across your lips when you speak but the words don't match the obliterated facts right in front of you and you say "That war's behind us" or "I held myself back this time" or "It will never happen again" or, best and simplest of all, "It's over." An exhilarating overstatement, no? How quickly we forget. Time flies when someone else is busy getting bombed. Time flies when you're cultivating an exacting appearance of surprise, a sincere look of contemplation as you measure the distance you've moved from intended results, a benevolent innocence that mouths dumb horror to fill distance, the horror of seeing what you do best and loving it, of hoping this pleasure never stops, the subtle pleasure of a repetition that strokes you relentlessly, strings you along, teases you to the impossible belief that what you want is the end, a closing, a wrap-up, a fitting conclusion, for it to be all over. Over? That's a scream. And you say it with such conviction, such certainty, such pig-sticking arrogance and finality, so casually, "it's over", but here you are, years later though it seems like only yesterday, doesn't it, flailing around in the fucking dark because there's no daylight anymore and you just can't let go of the knife and your grip gets tighter and tighter and your fingers sink deeper into the skin of throats that will never shut up even when they're dead and you're working that knife up and down in a frenzy of forgetting while you whisper softly, "It's over now, but not yet."



"A BOMB PLOT QUICKLY TAKING FORM RIGHT UNDER THE EYES OF INVESTIGATORS"

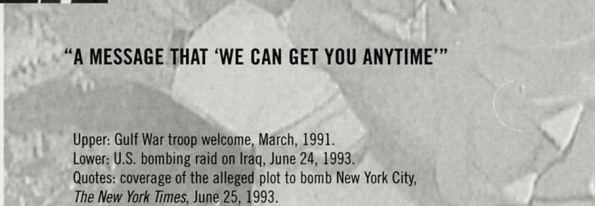


"A BRAND NEW APOCALYPTIC VISION BEING SHARED"



"A SERIES OF COORDINATED MURDEROUS EXPLOSIONS TO HUMBLE AND ISOLATE"

"A GRIM SPECTER OF TERRORISM ON A SCALE NEVER BEFORE SEEN"



"A NEW, EXPANDED, DEADLIER AND EVEN WORSE CLASS OF TERRORIST"

Upper: Gulf War troop welcome, March, 1991.
 Lower: U.S. bombing raid on Iraq, June 24, 1993.
 Quotes: coverage of the alleged plot to bomb New York City, *The New York Times*, June 25, 1993.

the devastation is widespread *it was a beautiful, precise routine* the effects are long-lasting *in a few brief moments it was all over* people will die for years to come *life quickly returned to normal*



Video/Film Descriptions

with country(s) of location/production

Video/Film Program I: Wednesday, November 20, 8:00 - 9:30 pm

mediating/meditations

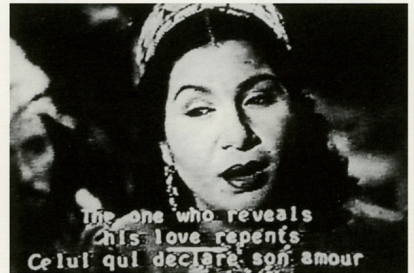
Ali Baba: Hollywood and Paris at Their Best
Yasmina Bouziane, 12:00, 1993, France/New York/Morocco,
French with English subtitles

Ali Baba is a compilation of images taken from early and contemporary Hollywood movies and television. Bouziane lays out an efficient critique of the West's sexual projections of the Middle East and pokes fun at what American and French pop culture seem to take as ultimate truths, reminding us constantly of Roland Barthes' famous phrase, "Representations are formations, but they are also deformations."



Far From You
Sami Al-Kassim, 27:00, 16mm, 1996, Cairo/San Francisco

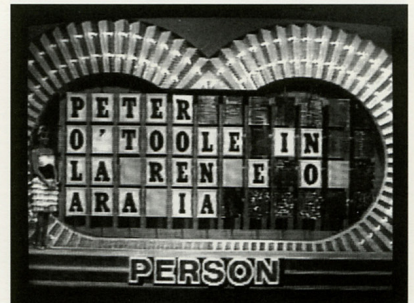
A film about writing to a convergence tangibly found in the voice of Uum Kulthoum, where the expectation to be seduced remains unfulfilled and is provoked by strategically placed nostalgic references and critical shifts focusing on Kulthoum's aura and iconographical excess and her massive literal and metaphorical status within Egypt and the Arab world. Pointing to the periphery where the real film takes place are ambiguous threads of palpability among distances that are not absolute.



مقدمة لنهايات جدال

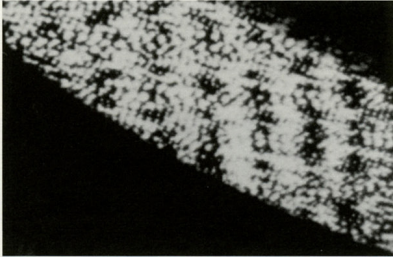
Muqaddimah Li-Nihayat Jidal (Introduction to the end of an argument)
Speaking for oneself.../Speaking for others...
Jayce Salloum and Elia Suleiman, 43:00, 1990, Palestine/
New York/Canada

Subverting the dominant media's forms of representation, this tape's highly kinetic tableau of appropriated sights and sounds works most earnestly to expose the racial biases concealed in familiar images. The storehouse of misconstrued ideas about Arab culture is shown in all its cinematic splendour. Salloum and Suleiman have constructed an oddly wry narrative, mimicking the history of Mideast politics. Through key political phrases we see repetitive distortions transformed into foreign policy. *Speaking for oneself...* is a first attempt at making the image and the act one and the same.



Video/Film Program II: Saturday, November 23, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

cartographies of history: borders, deportations and frontiers of exile



Signal

Pia Reunala, 2:39, 1994, Jerusalem-Jericho/Paris

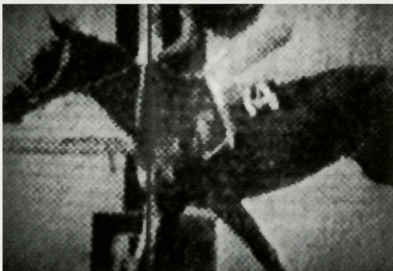
A trip to Israel/Palestine is the origin of this videotape. It questions the representation of the 'other' by playing with the absence of an identifiable image and an anchoring referent, the soundtrack. The Palestinian reality does exist, even if not present in mainstream media: one of a nation surviving, with its cultural practices and daily life. This tape makes this presence/absence 'perceivable,' using popular music and an abstract pattern built with television 'snow.'



My Father on the Tree

Seta Manoukian, 5:00, 1995, Los Angeles

A horse in a gallery, a bed in the street, her father in a tree, the ethereal images of this videotape slide into each other, collapsing spatial configurations and temporal anxiety. The fragments coalesce like the psychic shrapnel of the bleached dream that it was. Manoukian decidedly states some of the lush contradictions of Beirut at the time of war and her diasporic experience which followed.



Missing Lebanese Wars

Walid Ra'ad, 6:00, 1996, Beirut/Northampton, Mass.

A videotape in three parts exploring the possibilities and limits of writing and imaging a history of the Lebanese civil war. Setting up the viewer, Ra'ad constructs a tape fictionally based on facts, but not necessarily his. He examines a relationship between Lebanese gamblers, historians, and photo-finishes. With seductive bites, Ra'ad traces the movements "...of Zainab Fakhouri who left, or was forced to leave, Beir Zeit, Beirut, Amman and Freetown...between 1947 and 1971." Voices feed us contradictory information, questioning the construction of personal histories and collective knowledge while at the same time re-enacting such a script.



Voices of the Morning

Meena Nanji, 13:47, 1992, Mombasa, Kenya/Fateh Pur Sikri, India/Los Angeles

Inspired by *The Hidden Face of Eve* by Nawal El Sadaawi, this tape resists traditional definitions of a woman's role in society and struggles to find a space for her existence amidst the web of necessities imposed upon her by the familial and societal conventions of orthodox Islamic law and Western perceptions. Ritualistic cleansing with dirt, water and other white substances mask the viewed identity and claim a self-sensuality, an affirmation of the body and the self.

Into the European Mirror

Julian Samuel, 56:00, 1994, Montreal

This is a documentary on political and imaginary frontiers, the expulsions and resistance in Spain, 1492, and in Palestine, 1993. Samuel sets questions of historical Euro-nationalism in the Alhambra, Spain, the last Muslim fortress in Europe as the fall of the Caliphate of Granada coincided with Columbus's crossing. Interviews with Homi Bhabha (*Nation and Narration*), Chris Giannou (*A Doctor's Story of Life and Death in Beirut*), Thierry Hentsch (*Imagining the Middle East*) and Rana Kabbani (*Letter to Christendom*) extend the context further.



Video/Film Program III: Saturday, November 30, 2:00 - 3:15 pm

intersections: tales of wayward paths and estimating sites

22 x 4

Pia Reunala & Stéphane Pichard, 3:10, 1994, Paris/Jericho-Jerusalem, from the installation

Viewed from a passing bus, burnt road-block markings, refugee camps and settlement fortresses breeze by in sienna and golden hues, discom-bobulated voices fluctuate and provide a sound track for the alienation and distance between viewer and viewed, the land and a state, site and specificity, the dispossessed and diasporic.

Girl From Moush

Gariné Torossian, 6:00, 16mm, 1993, Toronto, English & Armenian

A journey through the 'assemblage' of a subconscious Armenia, one based in fragmented images engraved in film, most of which are reframed, cut and pasted into, creating the density of nostalgia for a home never visited. A scattering of semblances and crystallizing images, a phone call without knowing anyone there to see what it is like, a depiction of an Armenia unknown, yet progenitive.

*the pupil of her hand in the palm of her eye*

Claire Dannenbaum, 10:00, 16mm, 1994, black & white, Morocco/Oakland

A visual exploration of an invisible phenomenon, Dannenbaum's ambulatory film searches for an elusive subject. Using footage shot in Morocco, she traces the irony of looking, gazing and glancing at Moroccan women's culture. Ultimately an evocation of the references that lead to and hover around the evil eye, the film suggests the inherent complexity of ethnography and the documents it leaves in its wake.





حوادث *Hawadeth*

Ghazi Abdel-Baki, 14:00, 1993-1994, Beirut/New York, Arabic with English subtitles

'Hawadeth,' meaning 'the events' or 'happenings' is a Lebanese euphemism for the series of armed conflicts known as the Lebanese 'civil war.' Told in personal accounts and 'war' footage interspersed with journalists' quips and quotes, Abdel-Baki deals us wry humour and an ironical, caring critique of the Lebanese, how they are viewed and how they view themselves in and not quite out of the strife and warfare of the last twenty-one years.

بيوت - عبد الحليم *Home: Abdel Halim*

Akram Zaatari, prod. Future Television, 7:00, 1995, Lebanon, from the series *Home*, Arabic with English subtitles

In 1976, at the beginning of the war, Mrs. Jabr was obliged to leave her house after the red-tiled roof collapsed during bombing. She married there and lived with her husband's two sisters. He died when she was pregnant with their fifth daughter. She named her first grandson (she never had any boys) Abdel-Halim, his grandfather's name. Abdel-Halim joins his grandmother to narrate the silent film of his aunt's wedding in the big house.

Hommage by Assassination

Elia Suleiman, 28:00, 1992, Nazareth/New York

One night during the Gulf War awaiting news from his family in Nazareth, a Palestinian filmmaker confined to his apartment in New York begins to question notions of identity and exile. The images offer themselves as illusory vacancies, available sites of sights seen in the potentially infinite diversity of the Palestinian narrative. Suleiman opens territories for a multiple application of the Palestinian identity beyond the constraints of nationalism(s), beyond definition, where the concept 'Palestine' is disOrient-ed.



Video/Film Program IV: Saturday, November 30, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

engendering the 'orient'

Le Regard

Yasmina Bouziane, 12:00, 1993, Morocco/France/USA,

Arabic, French & English with English subtitles

Le Regard explores the 'seeing and framing' of an Arab woman videomaker. The 'downcast' lens forces us into the narrow parameters she is given. Intricate relationships, social class, gender



roles and cultural expectations are addressed within the videotape through the confrontation of the male-female dynamics within this particular Arab society. Consciously placed in a space of tension the viewer is torn between the anticipated and the actual, the prescribed and the practiced.

صبيان و بنات *On Boys, Girls & the Veil*

Yousry Nasrallah, 72:00, 1994, Cairo, Arabic with English subtitles

With his leading protagonist (Bassam Samra), Nasrallah takes us on an exquisite tour of a subject normally fetishized and miscalculated by the West. Taking the debate beyond the simplistic approach of intellectuals versus fundamentalists to a more socioeconomic level, *On Boys and Girls...* possesses a familiarity rarely seen, personalizing and bringing home questions that are too often overdramatized from a distance. Full of contradictions, young men and women talk about the 'hijab' and explore the meaning and practice of a symbol rather than deploying it in the polarized rhetoric of the misguided politicization of religion versus the state or, from the other side, total acceptance of Islamist ideology versus moral desolation.



خيدني *Khidni: The Fairouz Virtual Concert*

Amer Ghandour, 5:00, dreamed 21/04/95, Paris/Beirut

Using a reconstituted 'visage' and a translucent ghost-like shroud of the Lebanese national icon Fairouz, *Khidni...* (take me...) emanates from a dream of a concert for peace in the Middle East. Ghandour combines images from autonomous sources, international video clips and concerts, integrating the voice of Fairouz, the soundtrack of *Tivin Peaks* by R. Badalamenti and a rock band. An imaginary 'jam session' of surprising associations and all-encompassing ontological desires.



سينما فؤاد *Cinema Fouad*

Mohamed Soueid, prod. Tele Liban, 30:00, 1993, Beirut, Arabic with English subtitles

Censored by the Lebanese government, *Cinema Fouad* is a close portrait of Khalid Al Kurdi, a Syrian cross dresser living in Beirut during the war. In order to raise funds for her sex change operation Al Kurdi became a dancer and then a combatant in the Palestinian armed resistance movement. The tape subtly examines the issues of gender, identity and sexuality within the context of societal definitions, shifting conflicts, resistance and national struggles.



Video/Film Program V: Saturday, December 7, 1:30 - 3:30 pm

**accounting/encountering the 'real,' current
affairs, making views/telling 'truths'**

Saddam Speaks

Jon Alpert, co-produced with RAI Television, 18:00, 1993,
Iraq/New York/Italy

On his way to interview Saddam Hussein two years after the Gulf War, Alpert talks with Iraqi salesmen, shopkeepers, doctors and a group of Iraqi Jews inside their synagogue. The embargo is in effect, but the streets of Baghdad are full of life. At the same time, hospitals unable to get urgently needed medicine are full of the sight of dying children reminding us of the devastation and the continuation of the war in the everyday experiences of the people.

المعرض (Al-Ma'arad) The Fair

Hossam Ali, 25:00, orig. 16mm film, 1991, Cairo, Arabic with
English subtitles

What first appears to be a straightforward tour of the International Fair for Industry and Agriculture to witness the erection of the different pavilions, with a sleight of hand becomes something much more. The film exposes the contradictions between foreign businessmen praising international cooperation and its implications for the Egyptian economy and society. It makes subtle and dramatic shifts while examining the microcosm of the fair and, metaphorically, Egypt and its relations with the West.

انتظار, Intezaar (Waiting)

Rashid Masharawi, 26:00, 1995, Gaza, Palestine/U.K., Arabic
with English subtitles

Critically scrutinizing the United Nations policy of establishing and funding refugee camps, maintaining them (as a way of containing and repressing their inhabitants) and the status quo, Masharawi delves into policy and the Palestinian struggle. Established in 1948 as a temporary solution for Palestinians who were forced to leave their towns and villages occupied by the advancing Israeli forces (over 400 Palestinian villages were destroyed), the camps today are a permanent home. Raised in Al-Shati refugee camp, one of the eight camps in Gaza, Masharawi introduces his neighbors and family and offers a rare glimpse into people who have become refugees in their own country.

People and the Land

Tom Hayes, prod. Diverse Media Zone for ITVS/PBS, 56:30, 1996, Palestine/Columbus, Ohio

“Taxes Are What We Pay For A Civilized Society” opens a sometimes tongue-in-cheek exposé, and sometimes re-historical-pull-no punches dramatic critique of US/Israeli policy and actions. The official ‘history’ of effacement, censorship and presumed ‘realities’ are all under attack here in this hyper-reflexive, informative examination of the US’ (and the West’s) relationship with Israel and the actions Israel carries out in our names. Relying on the intended notions of International Law to counter preexisting ‘facts,’ this tape takes a truth telling position in the tradition of social justice and ‘direct address,’ bringing the debate ‘back home.’



Video/Film Program VI: Saturday, December 7, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

alt.identity, mapping the elusive

Seeds

Haytham Jawhari and Then Came Everett (Faisal Jammal and Mary Ann el-Hajj), 2:10, 1992, Lebanon/Doha, Qatar

A magical mystery tour music video shot meandering through the night in the streets of Beirut.

I Wet My Hands Etched and Surveyed Vessels Approaching Marks Eyed Inside

Roula Haj-Ismail, 13:00, 1992, Beirut/Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

“I wanted to look at how scars define our personalities. The same way our bodies are socially constructed and constitute a meaningful entity, scars, both inner and outer define us. The inner scars of my grandmother must be verbalized in order to be seen. The outer scars of giving birth must be exhibited. My life as an immigrant living in Australia, my return to my so-called homeland is also part of this tape...”



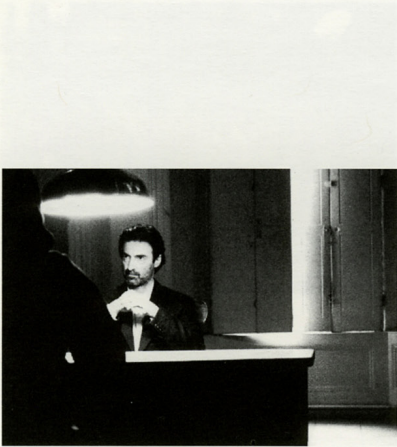
Water & Power

Sarah Vogwill, 17:00, orig. 2 projector slide show with audio, 1995, Brooklyn, NYC

Using a combination of images from popular media and family archives, juxtaposed with phone conversations with family members and reflections on the familial nature of colonialism, Vogwill traces aspects of imperialism found at the subjective level of experience forming one’s identity as American, middle class and gendered abroad in a “foreign land.” References to the work that is carried out on the



land and its resources suggest how materially based this process can be, where a landscape seen through the colonist's eyes is viewed both romantically and instrumentally. Vogwill examines the production of orientalist ideas and points to the effects of colonialism on the subject's psyche within patriarchy.



The Third Woman

Mitra Tabrizian, 20:00, 16mm orig., 1991, London, England

The story of an Iranian woman in an Islamic resistance group during the post-revolutionary period. A story of admirations and desire and the sexual politics within the 'progressive' Islamic ideology of the Left which recovers Islam as a new form of identity, independent of the West but constraining woman's identity as either a mother/housewife or soldier, obeying Islamic law with consent. The film draws attention to the contradictory nature of the Islamic Left making references to the ways in which the Left and the Right speak a similar language.



Fresh Blood: A Consideration of Belonging

b.h. Yael, 55:00, 1996, Israel/Palestine/ Toronto

A personal search of mythologies, memories and histories weaves in and out of anxious spaces with deceptive ease. The moment of anxiety is taken up here as a confrontation between the intimately personal and the political, racialized Arab/Jewish dichotomies and Iraqi-Jewish culture, and the 'return' to an 'Israel' in reality and myth. An ambivalent threading connects the relations of 'blood' and Yael's allegiances and professed politics, thus repositioning 'belonging' and cultural analysis in a familial quest.

Video/Film Program VII: Saturday, December 14, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

alt.anthro/ethnographies, the quotidian lens/scene

Biba non Biba

Hänzel & Gretzel, words Habiba Sheikh, music Paradise Now, 4:00, digital video, 1994/95, Beirut/Brussels

This whirling dance tape is a visual odyssey between Beirut and Berlin, "a woman's story" set in the civil fragmentation between two divided cities where images of destruction and reconstruction are intermingled. Re-mapping the genesis and thoughts of inner and outer landscapes, this is a visual and sonic plea for change that is inclusionary not exclusionary.



Pinched Cheeks and Slurs In a Language That Avoids Her
 Tina Marie Bastajian, 10:00, 1994, Los Angeles/San Francisco,
 English & Armenian with English subtitles

A triangulation of themes, positing layers of a monologue, mirrored images and a conversation heard and overheard. A questioning of belonging, to a culture and language that is both familiar and alien. The ambiguous background chatter in Armenian questions a woman's presence because of the colour of her skin. An ironic twist challenges racial slurs with the mystery and wisdom embodied in the making of Armenian coffee, and the reading of the coffee grounds.



Hajj (drinking from the stream)
 Claire Dannenbaum, 20:00, 16mm, 1992, Eastern & Central
 Turkey/Oakland

Hajj is an experimental ethnography looking at aspects of Turkish and Kurdish women's lives as processes of resistance made tangible in everyday life. Activities which are dangerous or threatening in the context of a gender-segregated and patriarchal culture are looked at while countering the mainstream ethnographic preoccupation with esoteric or ritual activity by looking at 'non-events,' the performative elements in women's domestic tasks. The film addresses the multiple meanings behind the potent social power derived from the marginalized activity of the home.



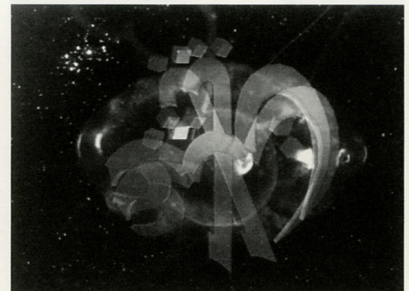
علمني Teach Me
 Akram Zaatari, 6:00, 1996, Beirut, from the series *Image & Sound*
 (*Soura Wa Saout*)

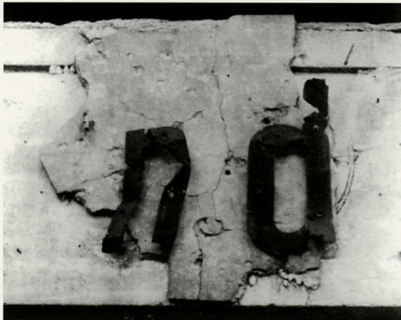
The medium as 'instructional' (ostensible and actual), and seductive are played off each other as Zaatari ironically directs actors and appropriates found footage (Vietnam, Peru...) responding to these roles: reaching the divine posture of the virgin Mary, emulating icons (Pilate washing his hands as a reference to crime) and constructing identities. Well-entrenched film icons Layla Mourad and Sabah make virtual cameos and are heard tying the reference to the filmic analogy.



على دلعونة Ala-Dal'Ona (Caravan Mix)
 Amer Ghandour, music and image Cedar Scent, 5:30, 1996,
 Paris/Beirut

A techno spin at hyper speed through images left behind and revisited at sites of origin and myth, a scanning of the 'Orient' in the face of Beirut, displacing its presence and relegating its absence to bits of memory and bytes of time.





Credits Included: A Video in Green and Red

Jalal Toufic, 46:00, 1995, Beirut/South Lebanon/San Francisco

Toufic registers the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster (the Lebanese 'civil' war) and produces completed crossword puzzles with blank spaces in a country of shattered signs: the rise in Beirut of an anomalous and sublime architecture of bricks in a period where it seems Arabs are being driven to the Stone Age (Palestinians throwing stones at the Israeli army in the Occupied Territories, *etc.*); using fiction to document the eruption of either diagrammatic or psychotic effects.

Video/Film Program VIII: Saturday, December 14, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

resistance, revolution and realities



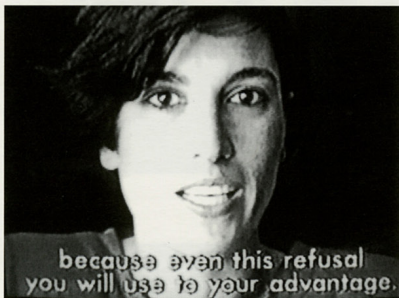
Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask,

Isaac Julien, prod. Mark Nash, 50:00, 1995, England

One of the most influential theorists of the anti-colonial movements of our century, Frantz Fanon pioneered studies of the psychological impact of racism on both the colonized and colonizer, and as Stuart Hall describes, "...wrote the bible of the decolonization movement," *The Wretched of the Earth*. Julien liberally positions Fanon's work through candid interviews and re-enactments centering around identity, the case of Algeria, the sexual dynamics between the races where each ambivalently projects its desires onto the Other and an impressive interpretation of Fanon's literal and figurative place.

طالعین عالجنوب (Talaeen a Junub) / Up to the South

Jayce Salloum + Walid Ra'ad, 60:00, 1993, South Lebanon/ USA/Canada, Arabic, English & French with English subtitles



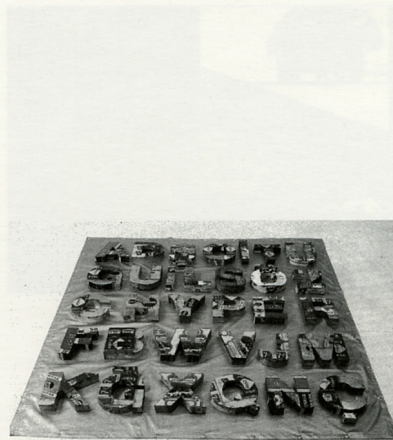
Ostensibly a documentary on the South of Lebanon within which we are trying to tackle two other concerns, one being the discourse of 'terrorism,' colonialism, occupation, resistance, collaboration, experts, the land, *etc.*, and the other being the history and structure of the documentary genre, specifically in regards to the representation of other cultures by the West in documentary, ethnography and anthropological practice. The tape challenges traditional documentary formats by positing representation itself as a politicized practice.

Installation/Gallery Work Descriptions

Sifir-Cipher

Vahap Avshar, used cans, lead, linen, 210 x 210 cm, floor piece, 1991, Ismir, Turkey/New York

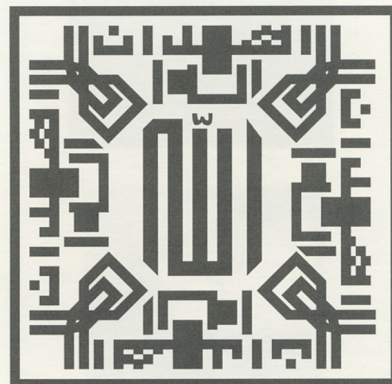
32 letters (a combination of the Turkish alphabet and Q,W,X added from the English alphabet) made of used tins of domestic products refer to the moment when Ataturk declared in 1923 that Arabic script would be replaced by the Latin alphabet and that the country would be 'realigned' towards the West and its institutions (replacing the alphabet, law, religion and dress code). *Sifir-Cipher* is about cultural schizophrenia and the confusion of societal values.



Virtual Prayers; Houa (Him), Allahou Akbar (God is the Greatest), Chahd (I trust there is no god but God), Bismillah (In the name of God, the Merciful, the One who has all mercy)

Thibaud Béghin, computer generated digital prints, 1996, various sizes, Lille, France

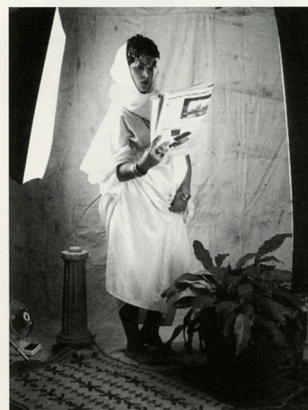
These 'pictures' are prayers and ritual sentences from the Koran. Not really pictures nor text, they are actually 'bits' of abstract memories in the computer. They exist virtually, only the 'metaphor' is visible. Religious calligraphy has no proper space on the pages of a book, on the walls of mosques it transforms its media into a space that is religious, *i.e.* abstract. Like many other prayers, these are characterized by the power and modesty of their intention and the simplicity of their realization.

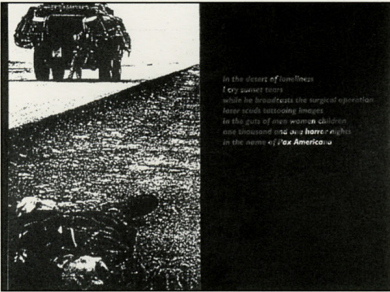


Inhabited by Imaginings We Did Not Choose

Yasmina Bouziane, from the installation: *Cours Élémentaire de Géographie et d'Histoire: A Museum Piece, Six C-print photographs, 40" x 50"* (three sepia toned, three full color), 1995, Morocco/Paris/NYC

Critiquing French Colonial postcards and their continuing referents in the twentieth century, Bouziane explores the different spheres in which these images operated. Through the self-portraits in which gender shifts occur and in which various socioeconomic statuses and roles are examined, she reveals the prevalence of the stereotype and its incorporation into certain segments of society. She also satirically illustrates the heavily constructed nature of photographs and how they inevitably 'help' shape the course of history.



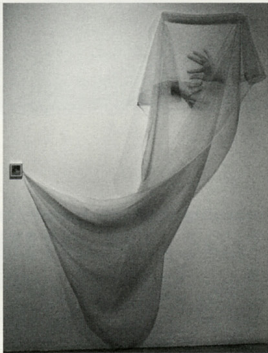


مذكرات: لا يزال الوقت للمندب

Diary of Images: It's Still Time to Mourn

Josely Carvalho, bookwork, 64 pgs, Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1992, edition of 750, Rochester/New York

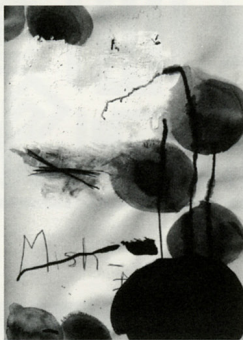
As part of Carvalho's on-going *Diary of Images, It's Still Time to Mourn* focuses on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and the subsequent Gulf War. Inspired by a *Chicago Tribune* article about an Iraqi soldier's diary, the book was designed in the form of a prayer book, thus capturing the meditative quality of the soldier's thoughts, and in the size of a diary to further suggest the overlapping between the private and the public.



Sima stealing off through the monsoon to see her lover

Eshrat Erfanian, photo-silkscreen, fabric & painting, 3 pieces from the installation, 1995, Toronto/New York

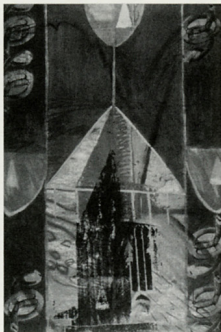
In a reevaluation of the problematized question of multiculturalism, alterity and female desire, these subtle works, understated in their ephemerality, are tactile and tactical incursions into cultural reading, set up in the domains of femininity, religiosity, mythology, fiction and history. Gesture and substance are presented as symbolic synthesis resisting the presupposed approach. The construct of a cultural 'other' is held in check, redirecting attention towards the question of the subject, foregrounding a narrative allowing for the opening of a space between cultures.



Unfortunately Your Home, Mish-Mish & Ah-id

Emily Jacir, mixed pigments on paper, 93" x 89"; 42" x 26 1/2"; 40" x 26 1/2", 1994/95, Bethlehem/Dallas

Painting once removed from the scene, these exilic inscriptions record the taste of the land and the sensibility of a culture. Colours and linguistic markings transcribe the distance, accounting for experiences, bringing closer to home, reinscribing the senses that are cut off, integrating the forcefulness of removal with the sensuality of place. Apricots erased and redrawn, reinforcing the consistency of absence and presence. The interplay of the layers, the time it takes to make.



The Procession, Composition, Temple & Interior II

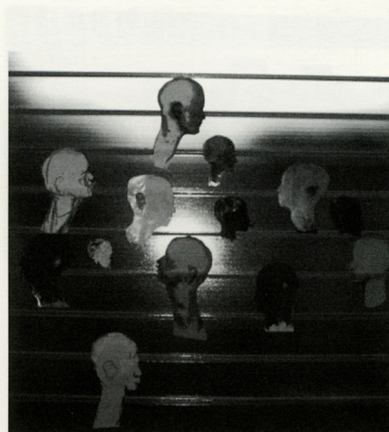
Farouk Kaspales, mixed media on paper, 3 - 38" x 50" & 1 - 25" x 38", 1993/94, Ottawa

Defining cultural identity in the context of place and the practice of art, Kaspales employs the iconography of mixed cultural origins (Sumerian, Chaldean/Christian and Arab/Islamic). He uses various representational strategies to address issues of personal and cultural displacement. Working through a strata of histories (including the recent Gulf War and its after effects), he links his work to the circumstances on the ground and the broader geo-political and social questions.

Ami (Friends)

Mireille Kassar, mixed media installation, 1996, Beirut/Paris

Developed into a rule of order from which 'exotic' or 'alien' variants are possible, these markings, an arm, a leg, tongues, ears, a mouth having finished speaking, are acts of reinvention, an acute depiction of sensory awareness and soulful rendering. Of ripped edges carving a space for an altruistic allegory of disembodied heads recognizing kinfolk souls in the corporeal experience. These are speaking parts, to each other, out of sorts with facing up to the exilic facts of their predicament, an entanglement with the world at large, a scattering of wounds on the surface that work to disentangle the circulation of interior imagery, rescuing on paper evacuated histories, for when all is said and done these pieces live in borrowed time, they are parts occupying an image of experience which will remain indelible long after they are gone.



She's All Dried Up, Dream, Seascape, Self Portrait I, Self Portrait II & Self Portrait With Bird

Shirin Kazemi, paintings, oil on wood, 6" x 6" to 16" x 18", 1994, Philadelphia

There is a composite experience here, East and West being 'unified' in this quasi dream-like space built up of lightly applied translucent and opaque layers of paint. Exploring female sexuality and painting traditions (these works are inspired by Persian and Indian miniatures and modern abstract works), Kazemi reinforces the logic each piece provokes. Viewed as pages from a book, shallow surfaces reflect atmospheric and essential elements, the brush-stroke leads to the 'sign' of the image.



Things to See/Places to Stay

Cynthia Madansky, installation with drawings, painting, velum maps, latex, text, glass and photographs, 1996, New York/Syria/Israel/Palestine

Grounded in the intersections of nationalism and colonialism in reference to personal identity (female, lesbian, American and Jewish), this installation examines specific cultural and political configurations of the Middle East. Areas of conflict, conflation and syncretism of identity are highlighted in painting and drawings, narrative accounts, documentary images and ornamental fixtures engaging the vernacular and problematizing the 'orientalist' gaze, accountability, representation and anti-semitism. The specific sites of this semiotic morphosis are Syria, Israel and Palestine.





كان يا ما كان (Kan ya ma Kan) / *There was and there was not*
Jayce Salloum, mixed media installation, 1990-96, Lebanon/New York/Vancouver

These fragments of an installation, an on-going research and exhibition project, serve to examine representation, and history as constructed in our collective and individual psyches. The 'Middle East'/Southwest Asia, has been a ground for continuous claims, discursive texts and acts of re-construction. Salloum tries to resurrect some of the artifacts and residue of personal and public histories to counter the erasure and champion the effaced, the ephemeral and the discarded evidence of our encounters.



Men in the News series #29, War Memorial
David Thorne, bookwork, 9 pgs, 5.5" x 4.25", 1994, Glover, Vermont

Part of a series which reuses media imagery and text to examine constructions of power and the representation of current events, #29 was produced on the anniversary of the Gulf War in 1994, and combines images from a June 1993 US bombing raid on Baghdad and a Gulf War victory celebration 2 years earlier with coverage of the "plot to bomb New York City," June 1993. Thorne questions what constitutes 'terrorism' in the context of recurring US missions against Iraq.



Victims of a Map & Jerusalem
Sami Zubi, steel and cement sculpture, 1996, Ottawa

Victims of a Map detains our presence and repulses our sense of justice. *Jerusalem* casts a concrete positioning of the Palestinian experience, the home and the land, the doorway of entrances and exits, remaining prone past demolition and in equilibrium before reconstruction. The hand of Fatima with the protectorate eye graces its cornice welcoming visitors to Al Quds (Jerusalem), the city of peace. What is embedded in this portal is the residue, the demarcating 'X' of the Israeli army, the past intransigence, the futile sign of elimination, the attempted crossing out of a history.

Biographies

Ghazi Abdel-Baki works for an architectural firm in Beirut. He received his M.A. in Media Studies from The New School For Social Research, New York, in 1994.

Hossam Ali is an Egyptian filmmaker living in Cairo. In 1990 he produced *Suq al-Rugalah (Market for Men)*, dealing with the realities of manual labour. His other films include *Yom fi Umr Masr (A Day in the Life of Egypt)*, *Azhar Muharraramah (Forbidden Flowers)* and *Thulathiyat Rafah (The Rafah Trilogy)*, a three-part documentary discussing aspects of the Rafah region following Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai.

Sami Al-Kassim, an American-Jordanian filmmaker born in Dallas, raised in Riyadh, now lives in San Francisco, where she obtained her M.F.A. from San Francisco State University. Among her works are *Lawrence of the Lambs (1996)* and *Trip/Ballade (1993)*. She is involved in establishing an Arabic film festival in the Bay Area.

Jon Alpert is an award-winning journalist who has received eight Emmy Awards. In 1972 he and Keiko Tsuno started the Downtown Community Television Center, New York, an active focal point of alternative video production and exhibition. Over the past 25 years Alpert has built a large body of documentary works covering both political and social issues, including ground-breaking coverage from Cuba, Iraq, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Kamal Al-Solaylee recently moved to Toronto after finishing his Ph.D. in Victorian Fiction at Nottingham University, England. He was born in Aden, Yemen, and grew up in Beirut and Cairo. He has co-edited works by Wilkie Collins and Ellen Wood for Oxford University Press and Everyman Paperbacks.

Vahap Avshar was born in Malatya, Eastern Turkey, in 1965. His family fled to Izmir, Western Turkey in 1979 to escape ethno-political oppression. In 1989 he moved to Ankara where he completed an M.F.A. degree and in 1991-92 he lived in Arnhem and

Amsterdam. He moved to New York in 1995, where he currently works and resides. His work has been exhibited in the US, Europe and Turkey.

Tina M. Bastajian is an Armenian-American film/video artist living in Los Angeles. Her work has screened in festivals and venues throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Her previous film is the acclaimed *Yellow Aria*. She is currently finishing a new film, *Jagadakeer; What is Written On One's Forehead*, and developing a traveling installation within the Armenian Diaspora.

Thibaud Béghin lives in Lille, France where his work often emerges out of the mixture of French, Arab, African and Jamaican Lille communities. Initially involved in graffiti and hip-hop conceptualism, he currently makes "cool Muslim things (he's cool because facing God, there's no need to get in a hurry)." He has participated in several European exhibitions including *Europe Rediscovered* (Copenhagen 1994-95) and *Art, Resistance and the English Garden* (Sarajevo 1996).

Yasmina Bouziane is a Moroccan/French artist currently living in New York. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Her recent video works include *Yellow Nylon Rope*, a first prize winner in the neo-ethnographic category at the 1994 Berkeley Video Festival, and *Imaginary Homeland*. She has studied at La Sorbonne, Rhode Island School of Design and the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program.

Josely Carvalho was born in São Paulo, Brazil and moved to the US in 1964. She began working on the series *Diary of Images* in 1970 in Los Angeles, and in 1976 started The Silkscreen Project which functioned as a printing resource centre for political and community groups in New York. Her installations have been exhibited in New York, Havana, Mexico and São Paulo.

Claire Dannenbaum lives in San Francisco where she produces short experimental films and ones focusing on ethnographic representations. Her films have screened extensively at venues in the US and abroad, including the Pacific Film Archives, Human

Rights Watch Film Festival, and the UN Conference on Women in Beijing. Her other projects include a collection of women's blood stories and a new film on henna lore in Yemen, *The Calligraphy of Sisters*.

Eshrat Erfanian is an Iranian-born visual artist who lives and works in New York City and Toronto. She studied art at York University, Toronto, and in 1995 completed the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. Her most recent solo exhibitions at the Linda Kirkland Gallery, New York, and Galerie La Centrale, Montreal, dealt with a reevaluation of the problematized question of multiculturalism.

Amer Ghandour, born in Beirut, currently resides and works in Paris, France. He graduated from the École Supérieure de Réalisation Audio-Visuelle (E.S.R.A.), France in 1984. He has produced a wide range of video clips, cartoons and documentaries on European fashion. Besides producing visual material, Ghandour mixes ambient music from the Middle East and the West to create a powerful fusion of two cultures.

Hänzel & Gretzel is a nomadic media art group based in Brussels. With a sharp sense of humor and an aesthetic "near-to-collage," the work of these French twins joined at the hip reflects various contemporary alienations and poetic deconstructions.

Roula Haj-Ismail, born in Damascus, Syria, is a resident of Beirut currently living in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Roula has a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Sydney, Australia, and an M.A. in Philosophy from the American University of Beirut. She recently published, "Feminist Aesthetics" in *Fikr Journal*, Damascus, and "Ethical Relations at 2500 Meters Above Sea Level" in the *Middle East Quarterly*, Melbourne.

Marwan Hassan is a writer living in Ottawa. His recent publications include the novel, *The Carpet* (The Mercury Press, 1995) and a collection of essays, *Words and Swords: an Anagram of Appropriation* (Tsar Publications, 1995). His other books include *The Memory Garden of Miguel Carranza* (Cormorant Books, 1991), and *The Confusion of Stones: Two Novellas* (Cormorant Books, 1989).

Tom Hayes, a filmmaker living in Columbus, Ohio has produced three long form documentaries. *Refugee Road* and *Native Sons: Palestinians in Exile* have been broadcast on PBS and Bravo in the US, IRT in Ireland, and SBS in Australia. "A deck hand on freighters in his youth, Tom has seen a great deal of this planet."

Emily Jacir is a Palestinian painter from Bethlehem who grew up in Saudi Arabia and Italy. She has received the majority of her art training in the United States, where she has lived for the past eight years. Her frequent return trips to Bethlehem continue to influence her work. Jacir has exhibited throughout the Southwestern states and is currently an artist in residence in Colorado.

Haytham Jawhari, a resident of Beirut currently works as an art director in Doha, Qatar. He is a musician in the band Then Came Everett, which has released two LP cassettes. Haytham has been active in the alternative music and art scene in Beirut for many years hosting radio and television shows, and having one of the most extensive new music CD shops east of the Mississippi. He recently produced a highly regarded series of cultural programs for Future TV (Beirut) called, *Code 574 111*.

Isaac Julien studied film at St. Martin's School of Art, England, and later became a founding member of Sankofa film and video collective. His films include: *Who Killed Colin Roach* (1983), *Territories* (1984); *This is Not an AIDS Advertisement* (1987), *Hats Videos* (1988), *Looking for Langston* (1989), *Black and White in Colour* (1992), *Young Soul Rebels* (1991) and *The Darker Side of Black* (1993).

Farouk Kaspaules is an Iraqi-born Canadian artist who has been exhibiting since the mid 1980s. Actively engaged with artist-run centres, he had a solo exhibition at Galerie SAW Video, Ottawa, in 1995 dealing with issues of the Gulf War. His first European exhibit in London, England, in 1993 established his link to other Middle Eastern artists working in the UK.

Mireille Kassar, born in Lebanon, currently lives and works in Paris. She completed her studies in 1995 at

the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris, and is currently enrolled in the Diplôme d'Études Approfondies (Ph.D. degree) at l'Université Paris I – Sorbonne. She was recently featured in exhibitions at the Juan Miro Foundation in Barcelona and in *Houna wa Hounak* (Here and Elsewhere) in Copenhagen.

Jennifer Kawaja is an independent film/video producer. She has been active in the arts community for the past ten years and is currently involved in a number of fiction film projects.

Shirin Kazemi is an Iranian-American who was raised in New York City and currently lives in Philadelphia. She completed her M.F.A. from Yale University in 1995 and was the recipient of the Helen A. Winternitz Award for Excellence in Painting and Printmaking. Her work has been exhibited in venues including 580 Broadway Gallery, New York, Muse Gallery, Philadelphia and the Kitchen Gallery, Iowa City.

Cynthia Madansky is a visual artist and independent filmmaker based in New York. She recently completed the installation, *On the Jewish Question* and two short films: *Internal Combustion* (with Alisa Lebo), and *We At Her*. Madansky is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program and received her M.F.A. from Rutgers University. Her work has been exhibited in East and West Jerusalem, Caracas, Sydney, Paris, Copenhagen, Montreal, San Francisco and NYC.

Seta Manoukian was born in Lebanon of Armenian origin. She studied art in Rome, winning a grant from the Italian Cultural Institute in 1963. Manoukian has lived in Los Angeles since 1986 and has exhibited world-wide for the past 25 years. She deals with the sense of dislocation and rebirth. From her early paintings to her later conceptual work, she has worked in a variety of media.

Laura U. Marks writes on media and visual art, and programs independent and experimental film and video. She is an assistant professor of film studies at Carleton University. Raised in both the US and Canada, she recently moved from the smoggy diasporan paradise of Los Angeles to arctic Ottawa.

Rashid Masharawi was born and raised in the refugee camp Al-Shati, in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. He started his film career at the age of 18, eventually working as an art director in over 20 films. In 1986 he directed his first short film, *Travel Document* and since then has made *The Shelter* (1989), *Dar O Dur* (1990), *Long Days in Gaza* (1991), *The Magician* (1992) and *Curfew* (1993).

Meena Nanji is of South Asian origin, born in Kenya, and is currently residing in Los Angeles. She is an independent video artist/curator obsessed with cultural identity and travelling. "One day she hopes to make a really good film."

Yousry Nasrallah is an Egyptian filmmaker born and living in Cairo. He studied economics at Cairo University and film studies at the High Institute for Cinema, Cairo. He was assistant director for Egypt's renowned filmmaker Yusef Chahin on both *Egyptian Tale* (1981) and *Cairo Shines by Its People* (1991). His first feature film was *Summer Thefts* (1990) and in 1993 came his controversial film, *Mercedes*.

Stéphane Pichard studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, graduating in 1993. In 1994 he won a scholarship to complete an M.F.A. at the University of British Columbia. In his work he has developed a reflection on urbanism and its languages.

Walid Ra'ad, a Lebanese media artist, is an assistant professor of video production and cultural studies at Hampshire College, Massachusetts. He received his Ph.D. in Cultural and Visual Studies at the University of Rochester with his dissertation: *Beirut ... (a la folie): A Cultural Analysis of the Abduction of Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s*. Ra'ad has lectured at many institutions in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Pia Reunala was born in Helsinki, Finland and lives in Paris. She completed her fine art studies at E.N.S.B.A., Paris and the Diplôme Nationale Supérieur des Arts Plastiques. Reunala has shown her work at institutions including, *The Laughter of Women*, Galleria Valoori; The Arthall, Helsinki and most recently in the exhibition *X/Y*, at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Jayce Salloum has been working in installation, video, photography and mixed media since 1975, as well as curating exhibitions, conducting workshops and coordinating cultural events. His work deals with a variety of contexts, critically engaging itself in the representation of cultural manifestations and other cultures. Salloum has shown at numerous institutions throughout North & South America, Europe, Japan, the Middle East and other regions.

Julian Samuel was born in Lahore, Pakistan. After living in the UK (1958–66), he moved to Toronto. He presently lives in Montreal, where he keeps an eye on the cultural and political establishment and its ostensible resisters. His films/videos include: *Black Skin; White Mask* (1973–79), *Dictators* (1982), and *Resisting The Pharaohs* (1984). He also published a book of poems, *Lone Ranger in Pakistan* (1986) and a novel, *Passage to Lahore* (1995).

Habiba Sheikh, primarily based in Beirut, is an actress, performer and writer who has worked throughout America, Europe and the Middle East. Though primarily a writer and a cultural activist, Habiba collaborated with Hänzeli & Gretzel in the production of *Biba non Biba*.

Mohamed Soueid was born in Beirut and continued to work there throughout the recent war. He is one of the central figures in the re-emergence of the 'New Lebanese Cinema.' He graduated from the Lebanese University in 1980 and subsequently attended workshops in film production and screen writing in France. Soueid is a pervasive filmmaker and critic in Lebanon and has written extensively on Arab cinema.

Elia Suleiman, a Palestinian filmmaker, just completed his first feature film, *The Postponed Drama of Return*, set in his hometown, Nazareth. His previous film, *Homage By Assassination*, was produced by Channel 4, Britain as part of a feature length compilation of shorts by Arab directors responding to the Gulf War. He has lectured at a variety of institutions in the US, Europe and Palestine/Israel.

Mitra Tabrizian was born in Iran and lives and works in London, England. She teaches critical theory and photographic practice at the University of

Westminster in London. Since 1983 she has exhibited in, among other places, Berlin, Stockholm, Melbourne and Boston. Her other films include *Journey of No Return* (1993).

David Thorne, based in Vermont, makes work in a variety of formats, all self-produced. He has not applied for individual artist grants, or sought gallery representation/art-world validation. His current strategy is to connect with activist organizations working on specific issues to provide a framework in which to produce pieces for public display, for use in demonstrations, political actions, and as organizing/outreach tools.

Gariné Torossian, an Armenian-Canadian filmmaker was born in Beirut. She moved to Toronto in 1979 where she currently lives and works. Much of her filmmaking ability has been self-taught. She has four films to her credit: *Visions* (1992), *Platform* (1993), *Girl from Moush* (1993) and *Drowning in Flames* (1994).

Jalal Toufic teaches courses on 'Vampires; *The Undead*,' and 'Dance in Cinema' at Cal Arts, Los Angeles and U.C. Berkeley. He recently completed a two monitor installation, *Ashoura: This Blood Spilled in My Veins*. His three books, gaining continuing notoriety and respect, are titled, *Distracted* (Station Hill, 1991), *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (Station Hill, 1993) and the recent *Over-Sensitivity* (Sun & Moon, 1996).

Sarah Vogwill is an artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York. Trained as a photographer and poet, her work ranges from installation to printed pieces. *Water & Power* evolved out of her early formative years living in Iran. The black and white photographs used were taken by J.D. Vogwill in the late 1960s.

b.h. Yael is a Toronto artist and an instructor at the Ontario College of Art and Design. Her films, which have been screened in festivals in Japan, Italy, Argentina and Canada, include *Why She Got Pregnant* (1985), *Is Dad Dead Yet* (1991); *You Belong to Me* (1986) and *My Mother Is a Dangerous Woman* (1987). She is a member of the Spontaneous Combustion Collective.

Akram Zaatari, from Saida, presently lives in Beirut. He has a B.A. in Architecture from The American University of Beirut (AUB) and a M.A. in Media Studies, from The New School For Social Research, NYC. Zaatari currently teaches photography at AUB and works as a producer at Future TV, Beirut. He has contributed essays to *Bomb* magazine, *Cinevue*, and the Lebanese daily *Al-Nahar*.

Sami Zubi is a Palestinian-born artist raised in Nazareth. He immigrated to Canada in 1978, seeking a better social and political environment. He studied art at the Ontario College of Art and at the University of Ottawa. He has participated in a number of exhibits in both Palestine and Canada and has organized several art workshops, most recently among women from Gaza refugee camps.

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& the board of YYZ and all the artists in the exhibition.

Panel Discussion

articulating the real, the imaginary and the undecided

Saturday, November 23, 4:00 pm

moderated by: Laura U. Marks

Sami Al-Kassim (San Francisco)
 Kamal Al-Solaylee (Toronto)
 Ursula Bieman (Zurich)
 Dina Georgis (Toronto)
 Julian Samuel (Montreal)



YYZ Artists' Outlet
 1087 Queen Street West
 Toronto, Ontario, Canada
 M6J 1H3

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