

Home Beirut. Sounding the Neighbors

Nov 15, 2017 – May 20, 2018

MAXXI / Rome



Lamia Joreige / And the Living Is Easy (still)

A new chapter of the series of Interactions across the Mediterranean dedicated to the relationship between Europe and the Middle East.

The story of a city, a laboratory of resistance, artistic innovation and hope seen through over 100 works.

The exhibition intends to put forward some of the most important trends of creative explorations of the contemporary reality intensively incarnated in the city's development and destiny. It will present some 36 artists, architects, filmmakers, musicians, dancers, researchers, activists with

their diverse forms of expressions negotiating between critical reflections of recent history of conflicts, through archiving and re-enacting memories, and prospections of the future, through attempts of urban transformation and global outreaching, periodically interrupted by urgent problems and frustrations of the present.

It will be structured in several sections reflecting efforts to build homes in a highly complicated urban context to accommodate different intellectual claims and artistic imaginations as well as various political positions.



***Marwan Rechmaoui, Beirut Caoutchouc, 2004 – 2006 / Photo
Musacchio – Ianniello – Pasqualini***



Etel Adnan / Untitled, 2013



Ziad Abillama, Arabes / Photo Matthew Hong

HOME FOR MEMORY

The memory of war is more than often a presence that looms over the art produced in Beirut. From the civil war of a few decades ago (1975–90) to the more recent conflict with Israel (the Lebanon War of 2006), and the current crisis on the Syrian border, artists have been first-hand witnesses to the hostilities, observing them and rendering them from a variety of perspectives. This goes from a prevalently documentary approach that favors the photographic medium to more personal views in recent years, often tied to one's family life, which turns to media such as drawing, often adopting the language of comics or graphic novels, and music. The processing of this trauma has generated most of the works present in this section.



Sirine Fattouh / MAXXI



Marwan Rechmaoui, Duchamp's Bride, 2015 / Photo Matthew Hong



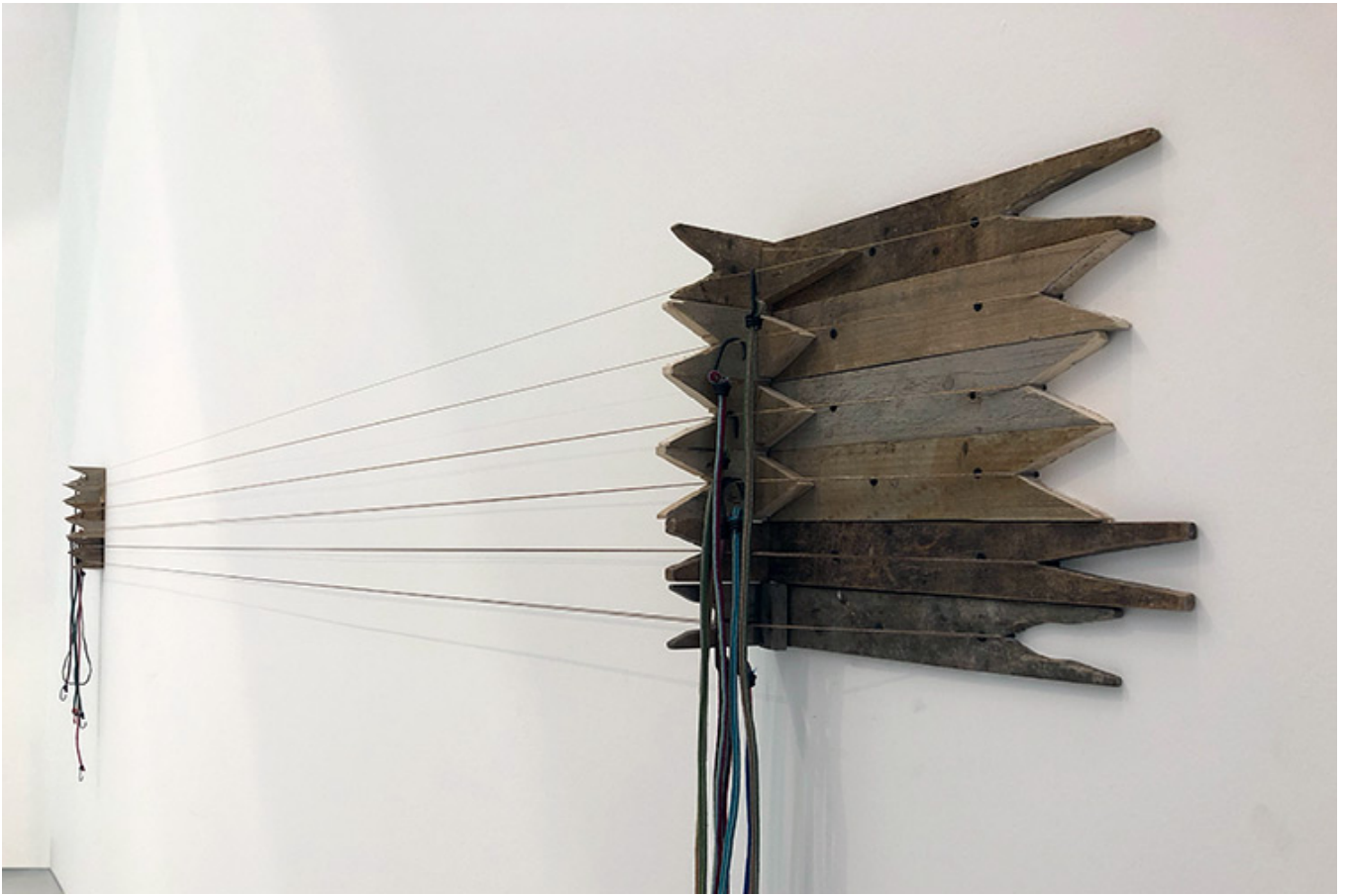
Photo Matthew Hong

HOME FOR EVERYONE?

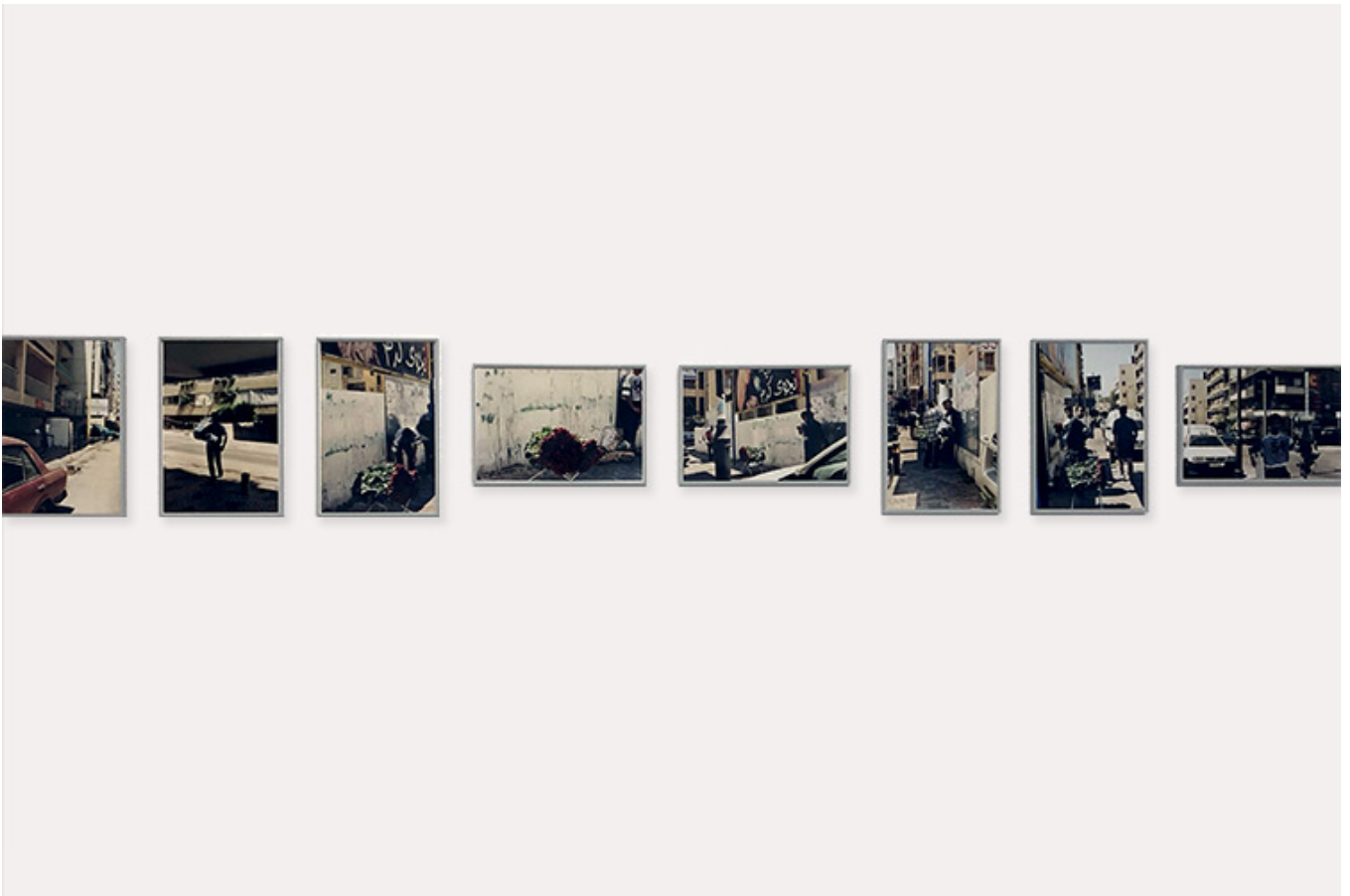
The current refugee crisis that draws three continents (Europe, Africa, Asia) closer and closer together is nothing new in Beirut. At various moments in history, Armenians, Greeks, Syrians, and Palestinians have found refuge in the city, contributing – in various ways and on diverse levels – to its constant renewal and reconstruction. Different cultures and religions have found a common home in Lebanon, in a process that has not been devoid of conflict. This complex history spanning the centuries has generated a multilayered identity that artists have constantly questioned, in keeping with an international tendency that marks the era of globalization.



Tamara Al-Samerrai / Photo Matthew Hong



Haig Aivazian, Bridge / Photo Matthew Hong



Paola Yacoub, Les Fleurs de Damas / Photo Matthew Hong

HOME FOR REMAPPING

Over the course of history, Beirut has been the theater of conflicts and moments of reconciliation. The events of the past have left tangible traces, and the radical changes faced by the territory are the focus of this section of the exhibition. From war zones to refugee camps, from the worksites of the construction boom of the past twenty years to the surrounding hills, and from abandoned ruins to the spectacular buildings designed by architects, the grid of the city has been radically modified by the joint action of human intervention and natural disasters.

The complexity of Beirut's image has offered artists great inspiration for research, spawning a vast production that also contemplates urban planning and the architectural dimension. This goes from the general – such as maps and the skyline – to details, such as the river crossing the city, or the port with its cultural and commercial exchanges.

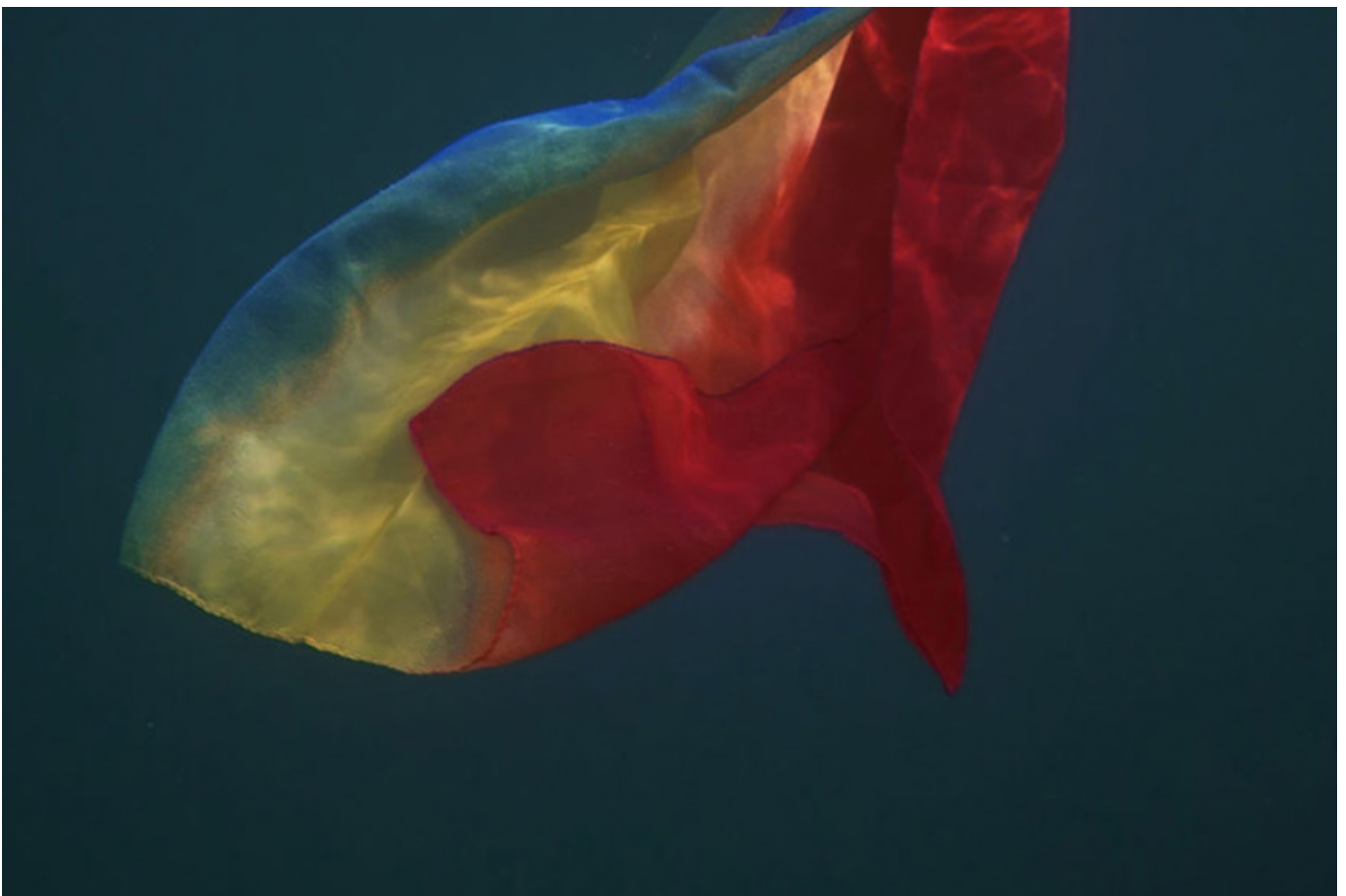
HOME FOR JOY

Destruction, passion and pleasure have been bounded to coexist indissolubly in Beirut. Despite contingent reality – wars and the ensuing trauma, and the unease of a complex present – the city has reacted with a rich production of the visual arts, music, dance, theater, cinema, and poetry, which this section of the exhibition examines in depth.

Artists have drawn inspiration from the painful history of Beirut, analyzing moments of tension and transforming them into acts of life. From ruins and on ruins, artists create, write, and dance to assert their humanity joyfully, despite everything. Joy and art represent a true form of resilience. Actions of exceptional vitality dialogue with the experience of loss; forms of exultance are the response to a difficult present experienced intensely.



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige / A Perfect Day, 2005 (still)



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige / Remembering the Light, 2016

(still)



Sirine Fattouh / Entre les Ruines, 2014 (still)

ARTAPES

On the occasion of *Home Beirut Sounding the Neighbors* – the exhibition aimed at analyzing important phenomena of contemporary society through the city of Beirut – artapes, the screening programme carried out in cooperation with In Between Art Film, will devote its fourth event to the presentation of videos made by some of the most interesting artists of the international scene.

By use of screenings and debates with directors, as well as introductions by critics, curators, and experts, the festival encourages spectators to better know the story of cinema and the role of the media in Beirut. Generally speaking, it dwells upon the great themes that are currently debated in our society: memory, borders, individual freedom, conflict and reconciliation, and joy as a form of resilience. The project includes retrospectives devoted to the individual authors and a thematic focus,

conceived as a complex, stratified portrait of the city.

Home Beirut. Sounding the Neighbors

Curated by Hou Hanru and Giulia Ferracci

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[MAXXI / National Museum of 21st Century Art](#), Rome

Artapes: Through February 2018

Please visit the [exhibition page](#) >