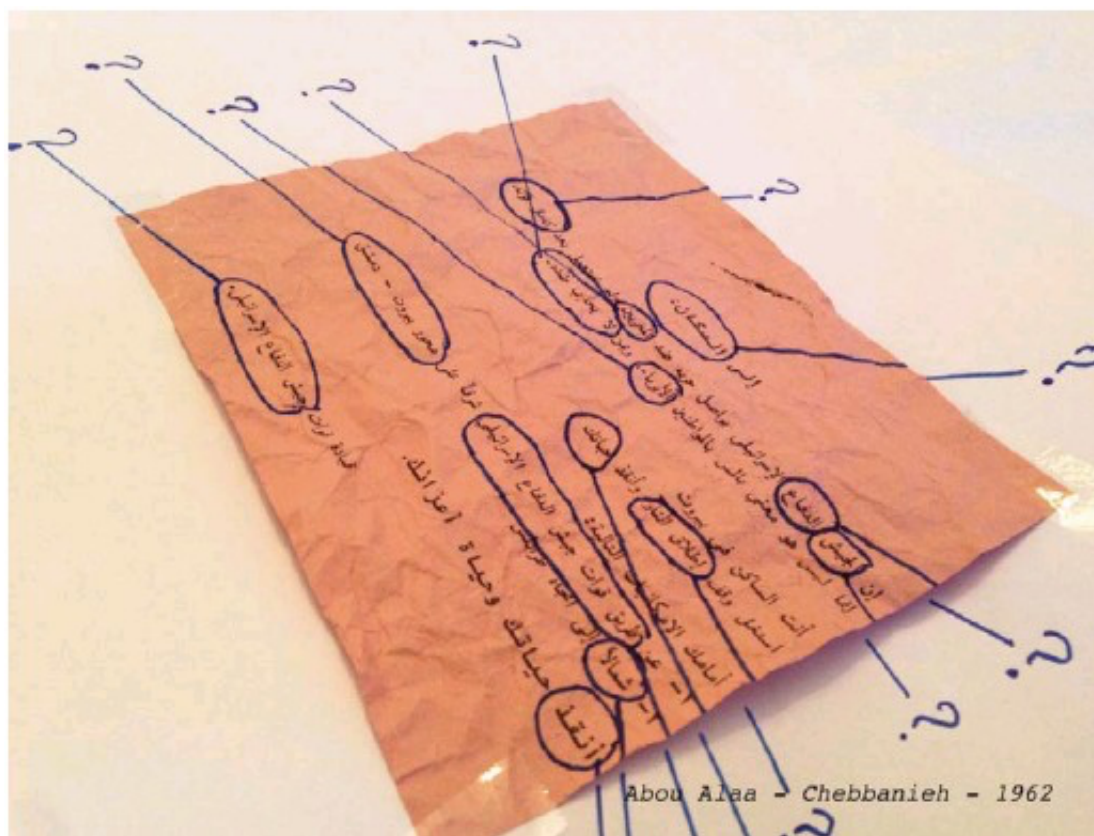


# Democrats start action to bring Trump to justice over Capitol riot

14 May 2015



Anne and Patrick Poirier, "Lost Archetypes," 1978, plaster on wood, Acrylic paint, installation view.



A detail from Rabih Mroué's "How the crocodile ate the sun," 2015.

Not far away, another work offers a somewhat different study of a work of visual art.

"Turner (Heidelberg, 1846)," 2014, is an homage to the work of English landscape painter JMW Turner (1775-1851), created by Düsseldorf-based Hiroyuki Masuyama.

The artist hasn't reproduced one of the Englishman's works on canvas. He went to the site that inspired the 1846 Heidelberg painting and took a series of on-site photos. "Turner (Heidelberg, 1846)" is a composite of these photos, mounted in a 91.4 x 121.9 x 4 cm LED lightbox.

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The works of Mroué and Masuyama share Sfeir-Semler's expansive space with those of 22 other artists to make up "Gallery 3010." Gallery founder Andrée Sfeir-Semler has mounted this show to mark three decades in the business and the 10th anniversary of her Beirut location.

This is a sprawling exhibition, with so much work by artists of such varied practices and aesthetic sensibilities that it resists the absorptive capacity of a single visit.

Anniversary shows like these are celebrations of success – on the part of the gallery itself as well as the artists they represent.

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At the core of the show are new and recent works from Sfeir-Semler’s stable of artists. Complementing these are more or less recent pieces by several international figures. Their practices are complementary enough that, when corralled in one space, their work might serve as a primer on the present state of the art.

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Some pieces, like Masuyama’s, are highly aesthetic, salable objects. This is true of “France,” 2013, and “Combray,” 2011, a pair of attractive medium-format, monochrome photo engraving-on-paper works by German photographer Elger Esser and Christine Streuli’s colorful “30 cushions,” 2015, which is utterly true to its title.

The show also includes a few works by Etel Adnan – three untitled landscape oils from 2015 as well as “Glory and Defeat, 197275,” her water-color concertina book from 2014.

Many other works here are, like Mroué’s piece, emblematic of critical approaches to how visual art is made, exhibited, assessed, valued, bought and sold.

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This number includes "I Thought I'd Escaped My Fate, I-IX," 2015, and "Preface to the fifth edition (1923), 2014," two freestanding works by Walid Raad, and a couple of jokey works by Belgian artist, poet and filmmaker Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976).

"Gallery 3010" also includes Hans Haacke's 1971 piece "Manet Projekte 74."

The touchstone of the work is Manet's "Bunch of Asparagus" (1880). A cheap reproduction of that work, gilt frame and all, has been tacked to one wall of the gallery. The rest of the work hangs on the adjacent perpendicular wall.

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Haacke eschewed the aesthetic criteria commonly used to assess the "quality" of an art object and instead proposed a sort of prosopographical approach to art objects.

He places the Manet's production within the artist's social, cultural and economic relations, then charts its market movement, accumulation of worth (complete with found depictions of the figures who acquired the work over the years) and museum acquisition.

Haacke's piece demands a little more time and intellectual energy than the Masuyama, say, but it isn't a sterile academic exercise. Rather, the artist appeals to the very human fondness of narrative, a narrative about

the human beings involved in the commodity exchange of art as much as its political economy.

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If there is a problem with this exhibition, it's that the urge to have significant artists represented sometimes trumps the effectiveness of the work itself.

Wael Shawky's "Cabaret Crusades: The Path to Cairo," 2012, is a case in point. There's no question that Shawky is, deservedly, a darling of the region's contemporary art scene. The Egyptian artist's "Cabaret Crusades" project, which seeks to retell the story of the Crusades from a Muslim perspective, using marionettes, has been a significant part of his oeuvre.

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The most successful wedding of aesthetics and critical rigor in "Gallery 3010" may be the two contributions of Haig Aivazian.

"Glasshouse [Jean-Marc], Glasshouse [Eliza]," 2014, 112 x 50 x 55 cm, looks like a breezeblock with a brick sitting on top of it, both mounted atop a plinth. In fact these two figures are made from marble.

Similarly, the marble "Glasshouse [Overhead]," 2014, 112 x 50 x 55 cm, resembles a piece of "zinco" or "tannak" – the corrugated metal whose lingering meaning in this region concerns its use as cheap roofing material for the temporary shelters of refugees – Armenian, Palestinian or Syrian.

Similarly, the marble "Glasshouse [Overhead]," 2014, 112 x 50 x 55 cm, resembles a piece of "zinco" or "tannak" – the corrugated metal whose lingering meaning in this region concerns its use as cheap roofing material for the temporary shelters of refugees – Armenian, Palestinian or Syrian.

"Glasshouse" reminds you of the world that fosters this region's robust art market.

"Gallery 3010" is up at Sfeir-Semler Gallery through Aug. 1. For more info, see [www.sfeirsemler.com/beirut/current-exhibition.html](http://www.sfeirsemler.com/beirut/current-exhibition.html).

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