MUSEUM AS HUB

TOWNHOUSE GALLERY

—NEIGHBORHO

ANTIKHANA

Yasmine el Rashidi, Writer-in-Residence, Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art

Cairo, "The City Victorious," is a city that has grown, unfolded, and sprawled with the turn of each decade and the change of each era of rule, evolving over the centuries that comprise its life, much like the singular "I" in the course of a person's existence. The urban fabric of Cairo—a city known by many names, including *Um El Dounya* (Mother of the World)—is as layered and complex in its persona as the history of the city itself.

In the heart of the modern city of Downtown Cairo, the unfolding of time has amalgamated architectural patterns of various eras, modifying and sometimes obscuring their original characteristics. The result is urban disorder—a chaos and plurality of styles and layers and statements of identity; a collage of worlds past, present, and in formation. Despite the contradictions, this incongruity of styles and histories paves the way for an unusual and intriguing mixure of identity. And in this city, quite unlike any other in the world today, the concept of "neighborhood" thus stretches far beyond a simple geographical designation on the sprawling city map.

Cairo's neighborhoods are urban structures that have incorporated in their identities the specific characteristics of their dwellers, with all their habits, traditions, preconceptions, and prejudices. The movement of those dwellers into and within the city reflects a social urban growth comprised of a multitude of layers, often overlapping, often in contradiction with the urban cultural identity they inhabit. The result in this city of seventeen million is a

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الأنتيكخانة

ياسمين الرشيدي: كاتبة مقيمة، جاليري تاون هاوس للفن المعاصر

القاهرة، «المدينة المنتصرة» ، هي مدينة نمت وتكشفت وتمددت أطرافها المترامية مع بداية كل عقد ومع تغير السلطة في كل عصر، وتطورت تدريجيا على مر القرون التي شهدت حياتها – مشابهة إلى حد كبير تطور شخصية الإنسان أثناء مجرى حياته. إن النسيج الحضري للقاهرة – وهي مدينة معروفة باسماء عدة بما فيها أم الدنيا – نسيج متعدد الطبقات ومعقد الشخصية مثله في ذلك مثل تاريخ المدينة نفسها.

في قلب المدينة الحديثة لوسط القاهرة، تكشّف مرور الزمن عن دمج أنماط معمارية من عصور شتى، فعدل خصائصها الأصلية في بعض الأحيان ومحاها في أحيان أخرى. وكانت النتيجة كيان حضري غير منتظم، وفوضى وتعدد أنماط الهوية وطبقاتها وبياناتها؛ ومجموعة متلاصقة من صور العوالم الماضية والحاضرة. ورغم هذا التناقض، فإن هذا التنافر في الأنماط والتاريخ يمهد الطريق لمزيج غير تقليدي وساحر للهوية. ففي هذه المدينة، بخلاف أية مدينة أخرى في العالم اليوم، يمتد مفهوم «الجوار» متجاوزا إلى حد بعيد المكان الجغرافي المجرد على خريطة المدينة الممتدة في غير انتظام.

إن الأحياء المجاورة للقاهرة أحياء ذات بنية حضرية ضمت في هويتها الخصائص المحددة لساكنيها بكل ما لهم من عادات وتقاليد وتصورات واتجاهات. وتعكس حركة هؤلاء السكان إلى المدينة وداخلها، نموا اجتماعيا حضريا يتكون من طبقات عدة متداخلة في كثير من الأحيان ومتعارضة في أحيان كثيرة أخرى مع الهوية الحضرية الثقافية التي يعيشون فيها. وكانت النتيجة في هذه المدينة التي يبلغ تعداد سكانها سبع عشرة مليون نسمة، أن تعددت الثقافات المجاورة المتميزة في هويتها المتفردة مثلها في ذلك مثل البيئات الحضرية التي نمت فيها.

ولا تستثنى الأنتيكخانة من ذلك.

إن جاليري تاون هاوس للفن المعاصر (الذي يقع في قلب الأنتيكخانة) والواقع في قلب وسط القاهرة، يطل على نفس المناطق الملاصقة لقصر مهجور من القرن التاسع عشر، فضلا عن مجموعة من ورش ميكانيكا السيارات والجراجات، ومقاهي عربية تقليدية على شوارع جانبية، ومحلات خضر وفاكهة ومحلات تجارة. وفي هذا الحي بعينه، الفريد من نوعه في سحره وغرابته، والذي يحتوي على مزيج من القديم والحديث، المتحضر والخام، المثقف والمعدم، التقني والمبدع، المحلي والأجنبي، الداخل والخارج، تتلاقى كل هذه الخصائص معا لتكون نسيجا ثقافيا، في الزقاق الذي يحتويها، لا يتكرر في أي مكان اخر في المتاهة الممتدة المكونة لقاهرة اليوم.

وعلى مر السنين، تكشفت في هذا الحي، حي الأنتيكخانة، لغة مزجت العوالم والكلمات والرموز لتخلق حوارا يتخطى حدود الثقافة والطبقة الاجتماعية والدين والجنسية. إنه تعايش تكافلي تصوره ورعاه الفنانون والكتاب والمفكرون والعمال المحافظون بالحواري، فالتقت عوالم متباينة وامتزجت في منطقة لا يكاد يتوقعها المرء.

إن هذا التقارب بين العوالم والأزمنة والثقافات واللغات هو الذي يشكل تناغم ألوان العمل في «متحف المحور: الأنتيكخانة». إن العالم الذي يحيط بجاليري تاون هاوس قد أصبح ظاهرة في قاهرة اليوم، بما يثيره من أسئلة وسحر وفضول دائم من قبل الكتاب والفنانين والمفكرين على السواء حول ما يجعل مكانا مثل الأنتيكخانة يتواجد ويستمر وينجح وسط عالم يتعرض بشكل متزايد لعمليات انعزال قاسية تفرضها الطبقات الاجتماعية والثقافات والفئات والأزمنة.

وقد التقط الفنانون سوزان حيفونا وأيمن رمضان وجان روثويزن وطارق زكي في أعمالهم هذا الانصهار الجامع لعصور تاريخية مختلفة وطرز معمارية وسكان، من خلال استخدام عناصر مادية مع البيئة الفعلية المجاورة للحي نفسه. إنهم يدمجون الأفراد، ويبحثون في النواحي المختلفة للبنية الاجتماعية، ثم يقومون بإعادة صياغة هذه المواقف البسيطة من الحياة اليومية العادية إلى معان أعمق وأدق. ومن خلال هذا العمل، يقوم الفنانون باستكشاف العالم المصغر والجامع لكل ذلك، واختبار وتشريح قدرة الأنتيكخانة على احتواء كل ما تفعله واستيعاب كل ما لديها.

——تابع على الصفحة 2

قراءات اطلاعية

أيمن رمضان، زميل بمتحف المحور

في أول الأمر عندما بدأت العمل في جاليري تاون هاوس في ديسمبر من عام 1999، تركزت مسئولياتي أساسا في تامين المساحات (وحيث كان الإشراف قليل طوال يومي)، فقد أتاحت لي الوظيفة قضاء معظم وقتي مع الفنانين الذين يعملون في الأستديوهات والموظفين بالمكاتب. كان هذا الوقت ممتعا بالنسبة لي. وشعرت في بعض الأحيان أنني قد دخلت عالما جديدا. وحتى ذلك الحين بدت لي حياتي فجأة وكأنها تبعد دهرا عما أراه، ولكنها مع ذلك كانت نابضة بالحياة وصاخبة في الشوارع التي تطل عليها نافذة المكتب.

ولدت في قرية صغيرة بالريف المصري، وعملت في فترة مراهقتي في المناطق الحضرية كثيفة السكان التي تكوّن معظم مناطق القاهرة، أكبر مدن أفريقيا. في القرية والشوارع «الشعبية» بالمدينة، هناك فهم مشترك لبعض المفاهيم التي تحكم حياتنا، فهي مجموعة واضحة من الأعراف وثقافة من الطقوس تحمينا وتحدد مستقبلنا. فلا يمكنني أن أتصور حياة تخلو من ممارسات درء المرض والحسد أو سوء نية الجيران. بدءا من السبوع عند الولادة إلى الاحتفاظ الضروري «بعين حورس» المنحوتة بدقة لمساعدتنا على تجنب ضغوط الحياة اليومية، نجد أن كل ركن من أركان حياتنا قد تأثر بطقوس صغيرة وقائية.

في كل شارع بكل قرية وبلدة ومدينة، عند افتتاح متجر جديد أو شراء شقة جديدة، يغطي طبع كف اليد المغمور في دم حيوان الضحية الجدران المحيطة بمدخل المكان الجديد. اليد تمنع الحسد وسوء النية ممن قد لا يتمنون لك منتهى السعادة. في مصر الحديثة، تعد هذه الممارسات متخلفة وبدائية، ورغم اهميتها في حياة معظم الناس، إلا أن الحكومة لا تتقبلها باعتبارها إطار لتاريخ زاخر مضى لدولة نامية. في صالات الجاليري وبالنسبة لكثير من الفنانين، تبدو الطقوس غريبة ومسببة للحرج وتعد عناصر قد يستغلها التصور الغربي للتعبير عن تخلف الشرق الأوسط. احتفالات الموالد – أحداث هامة في حياة ملايين المصريين – أصبحت تسيطر عليها حكومة دائمة التوتر حيال ما يمكن أن يحيد بصورة البلاد عن تلك الصورة الممثلة لبلد يتحرك إلى الأمام جنبا إلى جنب مع العالم المتحضر والمتقدم تكنولوجيا.

على الرغم من سفري ومعيشتي في الخارج، مازالت هذه الطقوس (وبالنسبة لكثير من المصريين) تمثل جانبا هاما من حياتي في الحاضر والمستقبل. في أول الأمر، عندما بدأت في انتاج الأعمال الفنية، ركزت على هذه الممارسات للإقرار بالأهمية التي لازالت تمثلها في الثقافة الشعبية المصرية، وسواء كان هذا العمل موجها توجيها اجتماعيا أو سياسيا، فإن هذه الطقوس ليست بمنأى عن السطح.

في يوليو من هذا العام، وصلت مدينة نيويورك عاصمة الثقافة العالمية والمنارة الوضاحة للحرية، والإلهام لعالم ما بعد المعاصرة الحقيقية، حيث العمل الشاق والجدارة الفردية هما بشيرا الطريق إلى حياة أفضل وأكثر أمنا. يمكنني نبذ الماضي والدخول إلى عصر التكنولوجيا الرقمية بأقصى سرعة. في اليوم الاول من وصولي تجولت فى جميع أنحاء المنطقة الراقية المحيطة بتشليسي، حيث كنت أقيم، وشاهدت المحلات والمطاعم ومحلات الكمبيوتر عالية التقنية ولوحات الإعلانات الإلكترونية التي تعمل أربع وعشرين ساعة وهو ما أوحى لي بمستقبل خيالي.

وتعثرت كذلك في العديد من قراء الطالع الذين لا يحصوا وهم يعرضون بفخر قراءة الكف والفنجان وضرب الرمال على الطريقة المصرية وتمائم الحماية ودرء الحسد. ووجدتني أسال نفسي: «لم بحق السماء يتجه هؤلاء الناس المحظوظون إلى هذه الممارسات الخرافية التي اعتقدت انها لا تلقى رواجا إلا في عالمي الشعبي وحده؟ ما الذى يمكن أن يحتاجونه من قراء الطالع ولم يقدمه لهم عالمهم على طبق من فضة حتى المنزل؟»

ونظرا لأنني قد منحت الفرصة في المتحف الجديد للمشاركة في الحفل الجماعي الذي تم تنظيمه للأسبوع المقبل، فقد قررت أن أكتشف السبب. كانت أمي قد علمتنى في صغري فن قراءة الكف، لذلك قررت أن أعرض خدماتي على المجتمع المحلي الخارجي يوما بغرض التسلية. ترى هل سيعتبرونها وسيلة أخرى للتسلية وتمضية الوقت في المتنزه أم أن هناك أشياء أخرى ورائها؟ تعد قراءة الكف في مصر مسالة خاصة جدا، حيث يعطى القارئ الفرصة ليكون ذا سلطة على الشخص الذي يقرأ له الكف مما يستوجب وجود ثقة كبيرة بين الاثنين.

في وقت مبكر من الصباح، أعددت منضدتي واللافتة الخاصة بي. وقد اندهشت حينما وجدت طابورا طويلا حتى قبل أن أهيئ نفسي للعمل. يوم كامل دون انقطاع، وأنا أجد أفرادا من كافة الأعمار والمستويات الاجتماعية والثقافات يقتربون من المنضدة في جدية صادقة طلبا للحصول على إجابات عن مشاكل شديدة الخصوصية ومقلقة أصابتهم بالإزعاج. لم تكن ممارسة بعد ظهر السبت فى المتنزة بالممارسة المبهجة، ولكنها الرغبة الحقيقية للناس وحاجتهم لإيجاد حلول غير منظورة الحدوث فى عالمهم الشخصي أو معتقداتهم الدينية. لقد كان واضحا فشل هؤلاء الناس بشكل أو بآخر، وكانت

——تابع على الصفحة 2

READINGS

Ayman Ramadan, Museum as Hub Fellow

When I first began working at the Townhouse Gallery in December of 1999, my responsibilities were mainly security of the spaces, and (as there was little supervision of my day) the job allowed me to spend the majority of my time with the artists working in their studios and the staff in the office. This was an intriguing time for me. I felt at some level I had entered a new world. My life until then suddenly seemed to exist a continent away, yet was alive and well in the streets just below the office window.

I was born in a small village in the countryside of Egypt, and as a teenager worked in the dense urban districts that make up most of Cairo, the largest city in Africa. In the village and the "popular" streets of the city, there is a common understanding of what governs our lives—a clear set of customs and a culture of rituals that protect us and determine our futures. I could not imagine a life that didn't involve practices that ward off illness, jealousy, or the ill will of our neighbors. From the *Sboua* at birth to the mandatory possession of the delicately carved "Eye of Horus" that helped us avoid the pressure of daily life, every corner of our lives was affected by a small protective ritual.

In every street of every village, town, or city, when a new shop is opened or apartment purchased, the print of a human hand which had been immersed in the blood of a sacrificed animal covers the walls surrounding the entrance of the new space. The hand wards off jealousy and the ill will of those who may not wish you the greatest happiness. In a modern Egypt, these practices are seen as backward and primitive, and despite their importance in most people's lives, the practices are frowned on by the government, framed as past colorful histories of a progressive state. In the offices of the Gallery and for many of the artists, the rituals appeared exotic, embarrassing, and potential elements of exploitation by a Western perception of a backward Middle East. *Moulid* festivals—major events in millions of Egyptians' lives—became controlled by a government perpetually nervous about anything that deviated from the image of a country moving forward, side by side with the developed, technologically advanced world.

But despite having traveled and lived abroad, these rituals (as for so many Egyptians), remain a powerful part of my present and future. When I first began producing artwork, I concentrated on these practices to acknowledge the significance they still play in popular Egyptian culture,

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EXCERPTS FROM THE LAST TOURIST IN CAIRO

Jan Rothuizen

Soft steel bumpers

Crossing a busy street in Cairo is like walking stairs, except you don't know ahead of time when and how deep or high the next step is going to be. This means you have to stand in the middle of the street while the traffic in front of you and behind you races past at high speed. The trick is to calmly wait until the next step presents itself so you can continue.

After three weeks I can cross the street without creating the impression of an anxious animal. But there's another reason for this: I notice that my fear of being hit has subsided. In some strange way I've become convinced that the cars are softer here; the steel of the bumpers will bend and the black finish will melt as soon as I come in contact with it.

Singing metal detectors

My throat is swollen, I sneeze all the time, and this morning when I awoke, bathed in sweat from a dream in which everything was out of focus, my throat was irritated.

I think it's the gasses, the vapors that escape from the cars, the black clouds from the minibuses that have crept into my throat via my nose.

The metal detectors placed at the entrances to hotels and other terrorist-sensitive locations here always go off when the locals walk through. The inhabitants empty their pockets one more time, watches are taken off and keys handed over, but the machine keeps beeping all the same when the people of Cairo cross the threshold. There's a rumor going around that it's because of the high concentration of lead in the air here. If you just stay in Cairo long enough, you collect enough lead and iron in your body after a few years to make every known metal detector sing as you pass through.

Everybody knows somebody and each person knows everybody

Cairo is a collection of looking glasses that I keep falling through. I discover layer after layer, each with its insights, possibilities, and rules, yet the megalopolis just keeps on chugging along. It's much more of a people city than Paris or Amsterdam. Everything is connected through people. Everything can be done. Everybody knows somebody and each person knows everybody. It's as if there was this grand persona of gigantic proportions, a persona who lives in everyone and holds the whole city together.

A million little pieces

In the neighborhood around the Townhouse Gallery where I work there are all sorts of auto-repair shops. One garage replaces windows, another does bodywork. What is striking is that none of the shops does everything. Each garage is specialized in one particular part of the car. So every screw, the rings, every engine part has its own place. So if you were to dismantle a car and open a garage for every part, you'd have a good impression of what this neighborhood looks like.

A self-fulfilling prophecy

Cairo is like a self-fulfilling prophecy. When I'm thirsty there's a stall where I can get something to drink. And when I'm hungry there's a restaurant. When I need a taxi I just raise my hand and a car stops right beside me.

The Center is everywhere

Why do I always think of the sea when I walk through the narrow, busy streets? Does it have to do with the memory of water? In the city, too, all the empty places are filled with garbage, people, clandestine shops, huts, and parked cars. And just like the sea, or the universe, Cairo has no center. Cairo is a center, and the center is everywhere.

Losing my feet

Every time I start walking through the streets I'm in danger of losing my feet. The streets are so full and I'm continually amazed by the quantity of everything.

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STORIES OF THE LOCAL

Clare Davies

The junction at the heart of the auto-mechanics' district in Downtown Cairo offers its own idiosyncratic version of the urban landscape: a decrepit palace built in red granite for a Turkish princess (the story goes) stands at one corner, and café customers drink tea in rickety chairs lining the wall of the palace. At the opposite corner, a once-abandoned building of pre-Revolution-aesthetic houses the local prayer area and the original three floors of the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art. Cars in various states of repair and disrepair line the intersection.

The Townhouse's corner office once looked out onto the junction from the first floor. It was the most porous room in the gallery, traversed by various visitors, workshop participants, young men with trays of drinks, and people actually trying to work on scattered laptops. Only a few months later, the office was relocated to the second floor to make way for the Project Room, a new space designed for events and interactive work that would engage rhetorics of the everyday and intervene in the relationship of the gallery to its multiple contexts. In a sense, the Project Room was to be an extension of the dynamics of the former office room.

The Project Room's evolving role points to the Gallery's self-conceptualization as space fundamentally informed by its surroundings—what might be called "the local." Since its inception, the Townhouse has situated itself and has been situated by others within this framework. It has promoted itself as a space that can relate to the local in an interesting way, not necessarily through an attempt to break formulas of tradition or by speaking for a local identity, but rather, through an attempt to expand the parameters of public discourse.

Cairo's arts scene has changed dramatically in the ten years since Townhouse Gallery first opened, and in many ways, the Gallery's involvement has been instrumental in this process. The evolution of practices of making and exhibiting art has revitalized debate about hierarchies of representation and their roles in defining the local among arts communities, and in changing the nature of those communities themselves. It is interesting to consider how this debate often establishes the terms of the local through a description of the non-local and the mapping of various concepts of otherness onto this space. To tell a story of the development of the Townhouse is to tell a story of the shifting meanings of these concepts: their contestation and articulation within a constellation of related ideas of authenticity, representation, and audience.

For a number of years, the representation of local culture, local arts, and hence the local itself, had fallen comfortably within the purview of the Ministry of Culture and a small group of private galleries, while maintaining a tenuous relationship to the foreign. The Mashrabiyya Gallery opened its doors as the first private exhibition space in Downtown Cairo in the 1980s, the first in a series of galleries to reclaim Downtown as a cultural hub. At the time, this gallery and those that followed suit, such as Cairo-Berlin, Arabesque, and Karim Francis, existed primarily as commercial venues, often renting space to cultural centers to host shows and creating a profit primarily through the sale of work.

Art clientele and audiences consisted mainly of foreign residents, often more interested in acquiring mementos of Cairo than in practices of looking at creativity or critical thinking in the arts. The work being exhibited often catered to a conventional taste for an "authentic" Egypt of painted arabesques and scenes from everyday life. This audience was suddenly and considerably weakened following the outset of the Gulf War in 1991. Subsequently, gallerists began cultivating stronger relationships with

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Current and in-depth information about the Museum as Hub project and partnership is available online at museumashub.org.

Editors: Rya Conrad-Bradshaw and Eungie Joo
Design: Omnivore
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——EL RASHIDI, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

multiplicity of neighborhood cultures as distinct in their singular identities as the urban environments in which they have grown.

Antikhana is no exception.

Nestled in the heart of Downtown Cairo, the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art (which stands at the center of Antikhana) shares its most immediate surroundings with a neglected nineteenth-century palace, a menagerie of car mechanics' workshops and garages, traditional street-side Arabic coffee shops, greengrocers, and carpenters. In this particular neighborhood, unique in its own intriguing and eccentric right, the blend of old and new, refined and rough, intellectual and impoverished, technical and creative, local and foreign, insider and outsider, come together to form a cultural fabric that, in the alley area that contains it, is not replicated anywhere else in the sprawling maze that makes Cairo today.

Over the years, a language has unfolded in this neighborhood of Antikhana that blends worlds, words, and symbols to create a dialogue that crosses boundaries of culture, class, religion, and nationality. A symbiotic coexistence has been conceived and nurtured between artists, writers, intellectuals, and conservative male workers from the lanes. In an area where one would least expect it, disparate worlds have come together and merged.

It is this coming together of worlds, of times, of cultures and languages, that forms the palette for the work in "Museum as Hub: Antikhana." The world that surrounds Townhouse Gallery has become a phenomena in Cairo today, instigating questions, intrigue, and the unyielding curiosity of writers, artists, and thinkers alike about what allows a place like Antikhana to exist, to survive, to thrive in a world that is increasingly subjected to the harsh segregations imposed by class and culture, sect and time.

In their works, artists Susan Hefuna, Ayman Ramadan, Jan Rothuizen, and Tarek Zaki capture this fusion of different historical eras, architectures, and inhabitants by using physical objects and the actual surrounding of the neighborhood itself. They integrate individuals, research different aspects of social structure, and reload the trivial situations of every day life with deeper meanings. Through this they explore the microcosm and the whole, testing and dissecting Antikhana's ability to contain all it does and absorb all it has.

The artists themselves reflect the multitude of layers that comprise Antikhana. Coming from different backgrounds and cultures, they are themselves disparate worlds, united by Antikhana, acting through their work as the conscious mediators between the obvious and a subliminal perception of more profound social meanings. The artists are the disparate worlds *merged*—allowed to merge—in this neighborhood that has defied the so-called social "norm" to nurture a cultural fusion striking in its defiance to what society has conditioned places to contain.

Bringing together different perspectives colored by the distinct worlds from which they come, the artists unravel some of the layers of Antikhana. Offering angled perspectives through their separate standpoints, they help illuminate the intricate dynamics of this neighborhood of peaceful coexistence that the world has dictated should not normally coexist.

In Antikhana, "coexistence" is examined, explored, scrutinized. Through it, the artists unravel their own fluid borders of identity, belonging, and perception of the other, while in tandem disentangling the distinctly textured, colored threads that come together seamlessly to form a reality that is a collaged neighborhood in which contrasting, contradictory worlds have found a way to integrate and coexist.

Antikhana is about the scale and permeability of one tiny neighborhood able to contain worlds within it. It is also about the artists themselves and the exploration of their consciousness to sameness and diversity, to singular identity and collective belonging.

——الرشيدي، تكملة من الصفحة1

ويعكس الفنانون أنفسهم الطبقات المتعددة التي تتالف منها الأنتيكخانة، فهم بعينهم يمثلون عوالم متفرقة بقدومهم من خلفيات وثقافات مختلفة، جمعتها الأنتيكخانة. إنهم يمثلون من خلال عملهم، الوسيط الواعي بين ما هو واضح والتصور اللاشعوري ذي المعنى الاجتماعي الأعمق. إن الفنانين هم نتاج دمج العوالم المتفرقة – التي سمحت لهم الظروف بالاندماج – في هذا الحوار الذي تحدى مايسمى «بالنموذج» الاجتماعي لتعزيز الانصهار الثقافي الذي ضرب في تحديه ما صاغة المجتمع من أماكن ليحتويها.

وقد كشف الفنانون عن بعض الطبقات المكونة للأنتيكخانة من خلال تقريب المناظير المختلفة المصبوغة بصبغة العوالم المتباينة التي أتوا منها. ولقد ساعد الفنانون على تفسير الديناميكيات المتشابكة للتعايش السلمي في هذا الحي الذي جزم العالم بعدم قدرته على التعايش في الأحوال العادية وذلك من خلال ما قدموه من منظور تناولهم للمشكلة النابعة من مواقفهم المستقلة.

في الأنتيكخانة، تتم دراسة هذا «التعايش» واستكشافه وفحصه. ومن خلاله، يكشف الفنانون عن الحدود اللانهائية لهويتهم وانتمائهم وتصورهم عن الطرف الآخر، جنبا إلى جنب مع حل الخيوط الملونة والمصبوغة بعناية التي تتجمع بسلاسة لتشكل صورة واقعية في حي تجد فيه العوالم المتباينة المختلفة طريقا للاندماج والتعايش.

إن الأنتيكخانة تحكي عن مساحة ضئيلة ونفاذة لحي استطاع أن يحتوي عوالم مختلفة بداخله. إنه أيضا يحكي عن الفنانين أنفسهم واستكشافهم لوعيهم المتماثل والمتنوع بغرض تكوين هوية واحدة وانتماء جماعي.

——DAVIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cairo art establishments. They reached out to collectors who focused on work validated within existing arts networks (predominantly those controlled by the government). Work produced by a smaller group of artists whose existence in limbo outside of the government-sponsored channels was supported precisely because of their distance from the establishment.

By 1999, the Cairo Biennial was hosting the work of internationally acclaimed artists alongside artists whose recognition did not extend beyond the government's local network. At that time, a growing number of resources for young and emerging artists were also developing in deference to the ever-increasing numbers of art school graduates, but always as a "junior category" within the hierarchy of the powers that be. The Townhouse had been established in December of 1998, within five minutes walking distance of the cluster of private galleries already operating. It defined itself as a non-commercial space for contemporary arts invested in addressing the creative needs and demands of local constituencies. The Cairo art world greeted the gallery with a mixture of measured interest, bemusement, and antagonism. Its location seemed an unlikely choice, situated as it was at an unpaved intersection known for auto-repair businesses and apparent illegal activity. Initially, the Gallery's location, combined with its lack of connection to acknowledged arts networks, made the Townhouse a non-threatening, if somewhat mysterious stranger. But it also inspired skepticism and deterred involvement on the part of Egyptian artists. The Gallery's first show opened with work by two foreigners living in Cairo and drew a curious crowd.

On the other hand, the government responded quickly to the Townhouse as a distinct threat to the status quo. A high-ranking official in the Ministry of Culture publicly questioned the gallery's credibility and its agenda as an arts institution. He mentioned the director's status as a foreigner and the gallery's unfamiliar, and therefore inexplicable approach to art and arts management as grounds for suspicion. The mutual identification of these two concerns framed questions of both national origin and curatorial approach within the single concept of "foreignness-as-threat."

The foreignness of the gallery's approach and self-conception was articulated through the director William Wells's foreignness (Wells is from Canada). At the same time, this foreignness was deemed threatening because of the gallery's approach rather than the idea of a non-Egyptian citizen establishing a gallery, as all the other directors of established private galleries in Cairo were non-Egyptian citizens. The foreignness of Townhouse co-director, Yasser Gerab, a Syrian by birth, was ignored.

The intensity of the perceived threat indicated a real and widespread concern with defining territories of cultural representation. The art world's changing dynamics brought this issue to the fore of the debate within arts-related networks and the gallery's development of relationships with arts communities outside of Egypt only heightened this debate. Lines were drawn in faculty and staff rooms as people disagreed over the validity of the Townhouse's presence. The debate surfaced in newspapers, and artists with stakes in receiving government validation or avoiding the government's wrath began pulling out of exhibitions at the Townhouse just before the opening of their shows out of fear of repercussions.

The Townhouse responded by not responding, while its efforts to reach out within the art world led to increasing support and a refiguring of relationships within the art world not dominated by the government. A meeting with the directors of the neighboring Downtown galleries Mashrabiyya, Karim Francis, Arabesque, and Cairo-Berlin mushroomed from a discussion about coordinating opening reception dates to a brainstorming session for an unprecedented Downtown arts festival. A press conference was arranged where gallerists promised a new era of collaboration despite their evident differences.

This spirit of cooperation laid the ground for the first Al Nitaq festival, a watershed event whose success in terms of attracting audiences and attention implied the development of new parameters for the dynamics of the local art scene and challenge of the centrality of the government's vision. The event's high profile did little to improve relations with the government. The interest of an "outsider audience" and the international arts scene in Al Nitaq shifted the framework for understanding Cairo's localness and the authenticity of art being produced there.

The second Al Nitaq suffered from what Wells described at a press conference following the event as a misplaced assumption of maturity as a community or movement on the part of the independent arts community. Rifts between the gallerists reemerged and plans for the following year fell through. Instead, the Townhouse hosted the World Press Photo Exhibition and organized PhotoCairo, an international photography festival the following year. These events highlighted the growing and often problematic relationship between a "local" Cairo and an "international" art world.

As a part of PhotoCairo, the U.S. Embassy asked the Townhouse to host a panel discussion by a group of American art critics who were in Cairo to attend the Biennial. The critics' descriptions of the government-sponsored event as mediocre drew indignation and charges of ignorance by many in the audience. The atmosphere in the room was charged as the authority of this panel of "experts" was both challenged and also affirmed by the anger and frustration expressed in that challenge. While the panel discussion and audience response demonstrated an antagonism over the presumed centrality of the international it also evinced a certain level of mutual investment and a contestation of common terms.

The centrality of establishing "differences" often serves to mask this shared ground. What remains most manifest is the attempt to specify the boundaries of the local as something describable and the non-local as something describable only in its outside-ness. The terms for reading this difference and the authority to set these terms are perhaps what were at stake at the panel discussion. The principle that control of representation translates into a control of the production of meaning is familiar, especially in the context of art worlds.

A group of relatively kindly policemen raided the Townhouse premises several weeks after PhotoCairo. They claimed to be looking for a picture of the Kaaba covered in blood. Private sector computer engineers were brought in to search the gallery computers. The computers were then hauled away for closer inspection, and Wells and Gerab spent some time at the police station. However, no heretical images where found and the computers were soon retrieved.

What this story excludes (consciously or not) is the excess that characterizes the telling of the meaning of the local, in this case within the context of discussions around contemporary art in Cairo. The idea of defining this excess is the idea of telling that which has escaped narration, and therefore promises a kind of transcendence and authenticity. Perhaps this is the dream of the local as articulable and knowable. The Townhouse's development has often triggered and been shaped by an increasing engagement in this ongoing process of definition and redefinition of this elusive concept, which always appears just outside the grasp of what it is claimed to be. The evolution of this debate, and of practices of making and exhibiting art in Cairo, will be informed by the resilience of the local as both a privileged framework of interpretation and a stubbornly indefinable position outside of representation.

This essay was originally commissioned by SPOT, a publication of the Rijksacademie, Amsterdam in August of 2005 and was revised in July of 2008 for this publication. It is based on a series of conversations between the author and William Wells, director of the Townhouse Gallery.

——RAMADAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and whether the work appears socially or politically directed, the rituals are not far beneath the surface.

In July of this year, I arrived in New York City, the capital of global culture and a beacon of apparent freedom; the inspiration of a truly postmodern world where hard work and individual merit are heralded as the way to a better and safer life. I could discard my past and enter into a digital age at full speed. On the first day of my arrival I wandered around the upmarket district of Chelsea, where I was staying, and observed the galleries, restaurants, high-tech computer shops, and twenty-four-hour electronic billboards that offered me an incredible future.

I also stumbled across numerous, countless psychic readers proudly offering palm reading, coffee reading, Egyptian sand readings, and protective amulets, and I found myself asking, "Why on earth would these privileged people turn to the superstitious practices I had believed thrived only in my popular world?" What could they need from the readers that their world didn't offer as home delivery?

Given the opportunity at the New Museum to take part in the Block Party they had organized for the following week, I decided to find out. As my mother had taught me the art of palm reading as a child, I decided to offer my services to a local community out for a day's amusement. Would they see it as another entertainment in the park to pass the day or was there something else involved? Palm reading in Egypt is very much a private affair, as the reader is given an opportunity to have power over the person whose palm is read. A great trust must exist between the two.

Early in the morning I set up my table and my sign. I was amazed to find a line filling before I had even prepared myself. For an entire uninterrupted day, individuals of all ages, social classes, and backgrounds approached the table with an earnest seriousness, asking for answers to the most personal and often disturbing problems that troubled them. This was not a lighthearted exercise for a Saturday afternoon at the park, but people's honest desire and need to find solutions that were not forthcoming in their personal world or religious beliefs. Something had clearly failed these people, and the intimate five minutes of wanting someone to help was worth the long wait in the sun.

This brief encounter with an American public reminded me of the individuals at home, also looking for answers to the same questions, relying on practices that are dismissed as primitive and apparently unenlightened. Perhaps those in positions of power and certainty need to look again at the answers they are offering. And the more open, receptive, and tolerant a society, so does its position rise in the index of developing nations.

——رمضان، تكملة من الصفحة1

الدقائق الخمس من المحادثة الحميمة رغبة فى طلب المساعدة من أحد الأشخاص تستحق الانتظار الطويل في الشمس.

هذا اللقاء القصير مع العامة من الأمريكيين، ذكرني ببعض الأفراد في بلادي من الباحثين أيضا عن حلول لنفس الأسئلة معتمدين في ذلك على ممارسات مرفوضة باعتبارها ممارسات بدائية وبالقطع غير متحضرة. ولعل أولئك الذين يشغلون مناصب السلطة والنفوذ بحاجة إلى إعادة النظر في الحلول التي يقدمونها. فكلما كان المجتمع أكثر انفتاحا وتقبلا واحتمالا، كلما ارتفع في عداد الدول النامية.

—ROTHUIZEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I still don't know how to protect myself from this profusion. How can I understand this place without splitting myself into the multiplicity of things that come at me like bullets?

I keep on walking down the narrow streets, past the coffee joints and the stray cats eating in the street. The speakers scream, the cars honk loudly as they brush past. Boys on bicycles balance baskets of bread on their heads. An old lady sells paper handkerchiefs from the ground. There's the sweet smell of the water pipes mixed with the cardamom from the coffee houses. People ask me where I'm from, and I smile without answering. Every step that takes me further makes me lighter. My hands begin to tingle. I order a glass of sugar juice on the corner of the street.

Voices over the city

Outside the mosques start to sing. The first voices come from the distance in a wave that swells until the houses of prayer and mosques in my neighborhood join in, too. But as the voices still in the distance creep over the roofs along the apartment buildings in my direction, they make for a split second the size of the city perceptible, the way an echoing voice would do in a room without light.

The anonymous impossibility of social coherence

Walking through Cairo I never get the chance to be alone. Whenever I come to a halt I'm caught up in small networks of coffee houses, laundries, and shops. Every square meter is so densely populated that it's impossible to remain anonymous.

Western cities like Amsterdam, New York, or Berlin are divided into individuals. A Third World city like Cairo works differently. Here it's the groups of families and working relationships that rule the streets, all small villages with the coffee house as the connecting center. Cairo is a friendly city. Wherever I stop I'm welcomed with open arms. Everyone looks at you and feels for you.

Everything always has somebody's name on it. If this city were a sea, then every ripple on its surface, every wave, would be populated by thousands of people who would call it home.

Becoming the sounds of this city

Sound is like smell. When it's new you smell it all the time, but after a while you take the smell, like the sound, with you, and they disappear into your clothing and the sheets of your bed. This is how I became aware that I was assimilating the sounds of this city.

When I go back to silent Amsterdam, I'll need a shower to wash the dust from my body. But it will take much longer to get rid of the constant honking in the background and the metal tapping of the gas sellers, and the voices that cry out things I don't understand.

The Sandwich Artist

"Hey, I know you! You're a movie star, right?" says a tall man who has approached me from across the street. He's holding a plastic bag above his head to protect himself from the light drizzle.

Although I have to admit I'm flattered and don't mind being taken for a famous movie star, I tell the man I honestly am not.

"Where are you from?" he continues. "Amsterdam? Yes, I know you from Amsterdam! Actually I see you on television," he goes on. "You are famous and I am a movie director from Beirut. Let me invite you for a drink. I will pay." And he shows me his wallet with crisp hundred dollar bills in it. Now, I'm aware that people who show you their money on the street are always after some of yours.

I decline his invitation and tell him I'm waiting for my sandwich to be prepared at the shop behind me.

"Okay," he says. "I will buy you a sandwich."

"I already ordered one," I say again. "I'm going to eat my sandwich later in my studio."

He looks puzzled for a moment and then says, "Well, will you buy me a sandwich instead?"

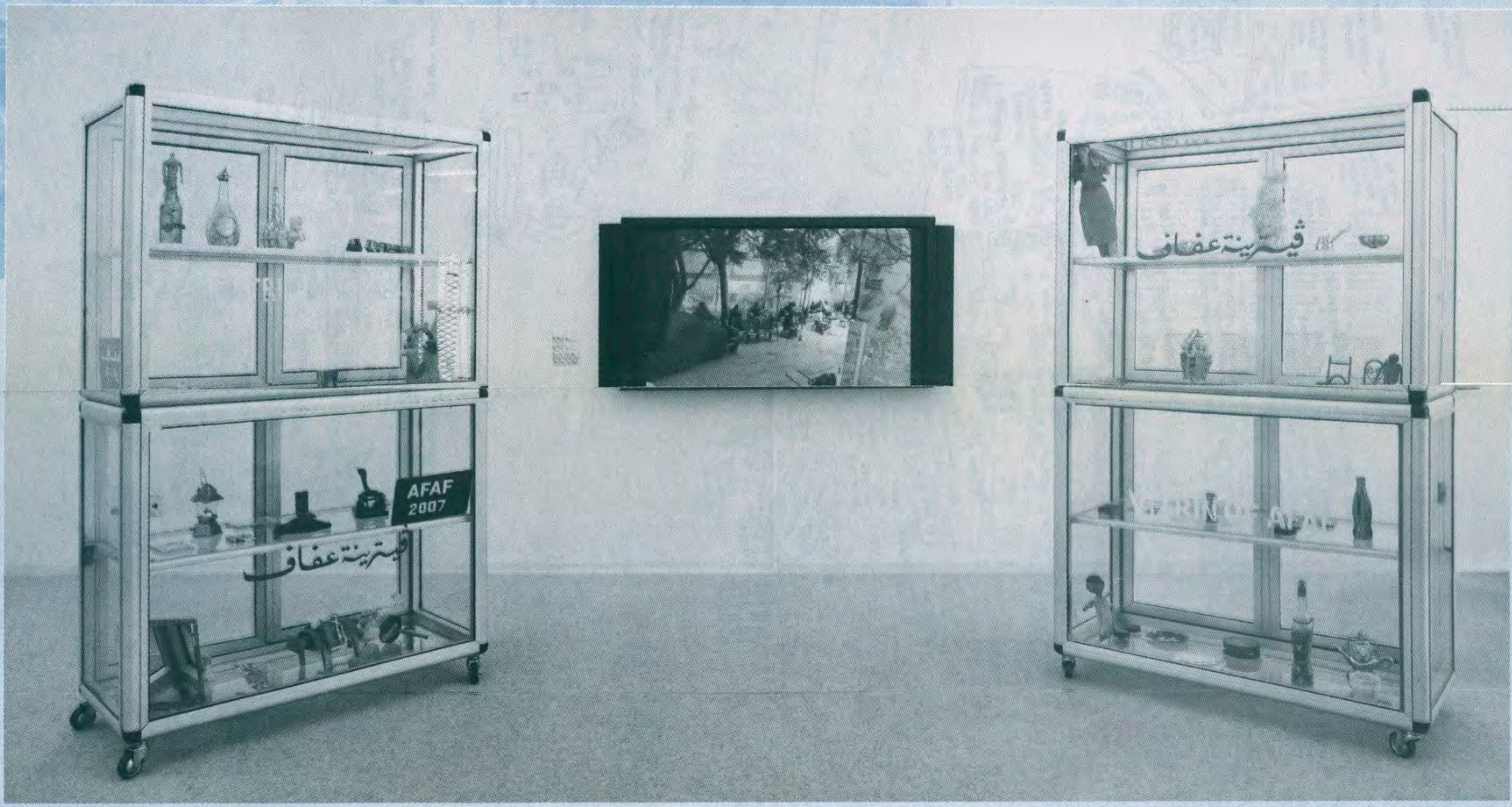
"No," I reply.

Suddenly his eyes narrow, and with a different tone of voice he says, "You are a bad person. I just offered you a sandwich and now you will not give me one? I would never do something like that."

Suddenly I feel bad. Yes, why not, I say to myself. Let's give the man a sandwich. We go into the sandwich shop, where he orders a sandwich and a Pepsi. As I take my money out to pay the cashier, he says with a little smile, "You must hate me now. Let me pay for this," and he goes to take out his wallet. But the sandwich artist has already won.

"No," I say firmly. "This one's on me."

Installation view: Susan Hefuna, Vitrines of Afaf, 2007. Glass, metal, and collected objects, 72 x 60 x 24 in (182.9 x 152.4 x 61 cm) each. Courtesy Albion New York and the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo. Photo: Benoit Pailley



Installation view: Susan Hefuna, Vitrines of Afaf, 2007; background, Cairo Crossroads-100 Minutes, 2007. Single-channel video with sound, 100 min. Courtesy Albion New York and the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo. Photo: Benoit Pailley

SUSAN HEFUNA (b. 1962)
Vitrines of Afaf, 2007
Glass, metal, and collected objects, each vitrine 72 x 60 x 24 in (182.9 x 152.4 x 61 cm)

Susan Hefuna's Vitrines of Afaf is an installation that explores prisms of perspective and changing realities of perception as the unfamiliar becomes familiar and as the private becomes public. Displaying everyday intimate objects belonging to the sisters, mothers, or wives of the lane workers in Antikhana, Vitrines of Afaf offers entry into a private realm of society, illuminating lives that otherwise go unnoticed.

First exhibited in the format of the traditional mobile vitrines that can be seen all over the vibrant streets of the city of Cairo, Vitrines of Afaf was first on display in the main street of the Antikhana neighborhood outside Townhouse Gallery. Hefuna uses the work to delve into the constantly shifting paradigm of perspective that comprises "the other." In this case, the other is "Afaf"—the typecast name given to women whose identities are kept sheltered from the public, in a manner that suggests the protection, and the creation of singular invisibility, in the traditional Egyptian culture.

Vitrines of Afaf represents the culmination of a journey into the lives and homes of these women on the inside, unknown parameters of the Antikhana neighborhood. Following months of interaction, storytelling and exchange between Hefuna and these women, "Afaf"——otherwise a local collective entity culturally constructed as a character of linear form—is unraveled, revealed, and unveiled to the public through a colored lens, with sensitivity to the individual within the collective.

Taking objects given to her by these women and that symbolically represent or contain dreams, aspirations, emotion, or fantasy, Hefuna creates through Vitrines of Afaf a viewing platform through which to look beyond the uniform exterior and to the singular and unique in those cast as one: "Afaf." Through a collection of objects that range from plates to pictures to handmade dolls, china cups, a Mickey Mouse, personal photos, and remnants from summer holidays and family moments, Hefuna captures the plethora of human emotions that swirl through every and any individual, from sadness and loss, to fantasy, desire, and the whimsical inner journey of "hope," which through its energy gives birth to dreams and imaginary realities.

Hefuna's Vitrines of Afaf gives voice to the voiceless, and gives color and shape and personality to the anonymous women who are otherwise simply known by "Afaf." It also unveils one more layer to intricate tapestry that is Antikhana.

تمثل فاترينات عفاف تتويجًا لرحلة داخل حياة ومنازل هؤلاء النساء الداخلية، وأبعاد غير معروفة لحي الانتيكخانة. فبعد شهور من الاختلاط وتبادل الحكايات والتفاعل بين حيفونا وهؤلاء النساء، فإن «عفاف» – فهن بخلاف ذلك كيان جماعي محلي تمت صياغته ثقافيا كشخصية ذات طابع خطي – تتكشف وتظهر سافرة بدون نقاب للعامة من خلال عدسة ملونة، ذات حساسية تجاه الفرد داخل الجماعة.

عن طريق أخذ أشياء المقدمة لها من هؤلاء النساء، والتي تمثل أو تحتوي بشكل رمزي على أحلام وتطلعات وعواطف وخيالات، تخلق حيفونا من فاترينات عفاف منبرا للمشاهدة، للنظر في ما وراء الشكل الخارجي الموحد إلى الكيان المتفرد الفريد في أولئك المتمثلات في واحدة: ألا وهن «عفاف». من خلال مجموعة من الأشياء بدءا من الأطباق إلى صور ودمى يدوية وكئوس صينية ودمية ميكي ماوس وصور شخصية وذكريات من عطلات صيفية ولحظات عائلية، تسجل حيفونة فيضا من المشاعر الإنسانية التي تلف دوامتها بفكر كل وأي شخص من حزن وضياع إلى خيال ورغبة إلى رحلة «الأمل» الداخلية الغريبة التي تولد طاقتها أحلاما وحقائق وهمية.

إن فاترينات عفاف التابعة لسوزان حيفونا تضفي صوتا لمن لا صوت له، وتصبغ هؤلاء النساء المجهولات باللون والشكل والشخصية التي لولاها لأصبحوا مجرد نساء ملقبات بـ «عفاف». إضافة إلى ذلك، فإنها تكشف طبقة أخرى من نسيج حي الأنتيكخانة المعقد.

سوزان حيفونا (ولدت في 1962)
فاترينات عفاف، 2007
زجاج ومعدن وعناصر مجمعة، حجم كل فترينة هو 24x 60 x 72 بوصة (61x 152.4 x 182.9 سم)

فاترينات عفاف التابعة لسوزان حيفونا هي تركيبات تستكشف منظور المنشورات البصرية وتغير حقائق الإدراك حينما يتحول غير المألوف إلى مألوف ويصبح الخاص عام. من خلال عرض الأشياء اليومية الحميمة الخاصة بأخوات أو أمهات أو زوجات عاملي الحارة في الأنتيكخانة، تعرض فاترينات عفاف الدخول إلى عالم خاص بالمجتمع لإلقاء الضوء على الحيوات التي لولا هذه الفاترينات لمرت دون أن يلحظها أحد.

عُرضت فاترينات عفاف لأول مرة في الشارع الرئيسي بحي الأنتيكخانة خارج جاليري تاون هاوس وكانت تُعرض في البداية في شكل فاترينات تقليدية متنقلة حتى يمكن مشاهدتها في كافة أنحاء شوارع مدينة القاهرة النابضة بالحياة. تستخدم حيفونا هذا العمل للغوص في منظور النموذج المتغير دوما لشخصية «الآخر». في هذه الحالة، يعد الآخر «عفاف» – وهو اسم كناية عن النساء اللاتي تبقى شخصياتهن محجوبة عن العامة بأسلوب يوحي بالحماية وإيجاد حجاب متفرد في الثقافة التقليدية المصرية.

SUSAN HEFUNA (b.1962)
Cairo Crossroads, 2007
Single-channel video, 100 min

In her video Cairo Crossroads, artist Susan Hefuna takes an aerial view of the main junction that comprises a neighborhood and documents through it the realities of layers of life, community, and culture unfolding in the organic form that comprises any passing day.

Focusing on the junction of Antikhana where activities collide, it captures through the first-floor balcony of Townhouse Gallery the movement of people, of cars, of bicycles as they move from one reality to the next. Unfolding on "the junction" are the intricacies of interaction: the building,and its fragmentations and symbioses of relations, work, and community.

The 100-minute unedited video captures the volatile temperaments of the workers on the lane when something goes wrong—through mere documention. In the background, the street-side Arabic café operates untouched by the violent language and threats of the people fighting. In the minute details of life unfolding—which offers entry into a world that is as particular to its environment as it is universal——the video draws viewers in to the rhythm of life and time passing, raising through its universality the perspective on the movement of time, and the depth and rigor with which it is monitored and utilized and appreciated in our day-to-day lives.

The only thing that remains permanent in the video is the passing of faces, some of them passing into the unknown and fading from the viewers' conscious visual memory, and others becoming familiar as the junction reveals itself as not just one of the urban landscape, but also as the junction that forms the core of their everyday lives.

At this junction that reveals nothing beyond the borders captured on screen, the prisms of the transient and the permanent reveal the layers of lives contained within two roads that lead to nowhere yet are infinite in their reach. At a crossroads of a neighborhood in which worlds have collided and layers of history and culture have formed a culture and story of their own, Cairo Crossroads offers a visual vignette into the unfolding life of Antikhana.

سوزان حيفونا (ولدت في 1962)
مفترق طرق القاهرة، 2007
قناة فيديو واحدة – 100 دقيقة

في شريط الفيديو مفترق طرق القاهرة للفنانة سوزان حيفونا، تأخذ حيفونا نظرة من الجو للتقاطع الرئيسي الذي يضمه أحد الأحياء وتسجل من خلاله حقائق عن طبقات الحياة والمجتمع والثقافة لتبدي للعيان الشكل العضوي الذي يتالف منه أي يوم عابر.

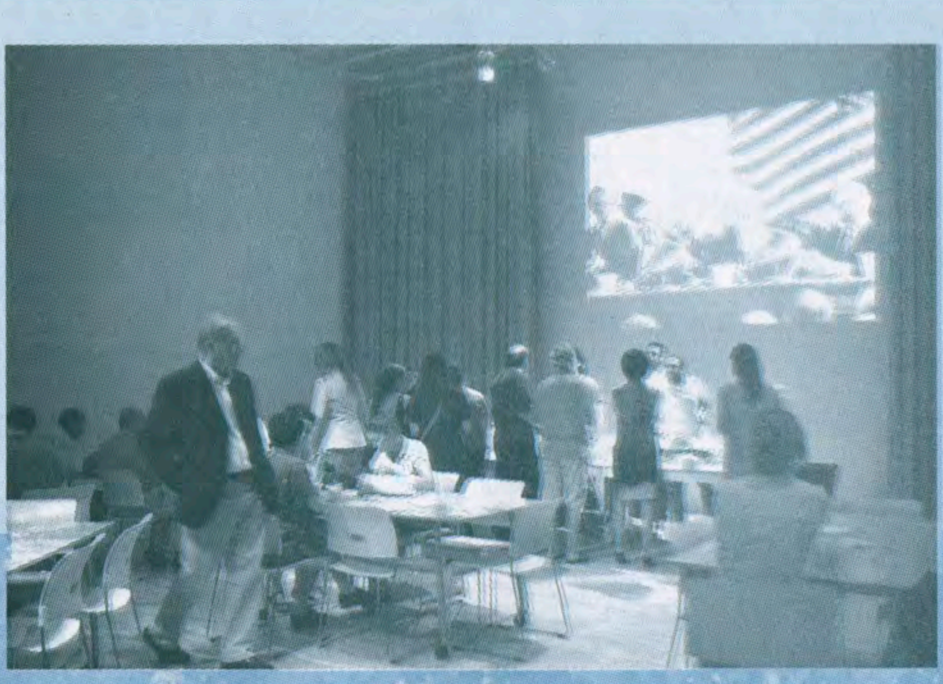
يركز الشريط على تقاطع حي الأنتيكخانة حيث تتصادم الأنشطة، فيسجل من شرفة الطابق الأول بجاليري تاون هاوس حركة الناس والسيارات والدراجات وهي تنتقل من واقع إلى آخر. وتتكشف من خلال «التقاطع» تفاصيل التفاعل المعقدة: المبنى بأجزائه والتكافل في العلاقات والعمل والمجتمع.

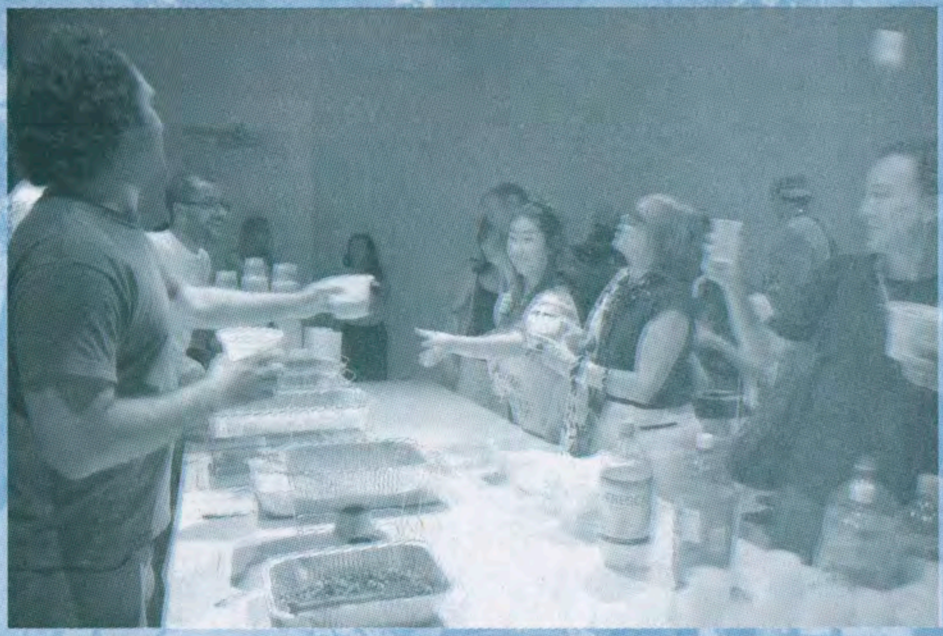
يلتقط شريط الفيديو الذي لم يتم عمل مونتاج له، طوال مائة دقيقة المزاج المتقلب لعمال الحارة عند حدوث أي خطأ – من خلال التسجيل وحده. وفي الخلفية، يعمل المقهى العربي في الشارع الجانبي بمأمن عن لغة العنف والتهديد للمتعاركين. في التفاصيل الدقيقة للحياة المنكشفة – التي تتيح الدخول إلى عالم خاص في بيئته مثلما هو خاص في عالميته – يوجه الفيديو انتباه المشاهدين إلى إيقاع الحياة ومرور الوقت، رافعا من خلال عموميته، منظور حركة الزمن والعمق والصرامة التي يتم رصده بهما واستغلاله وتقديره في حياتنا اليومية.

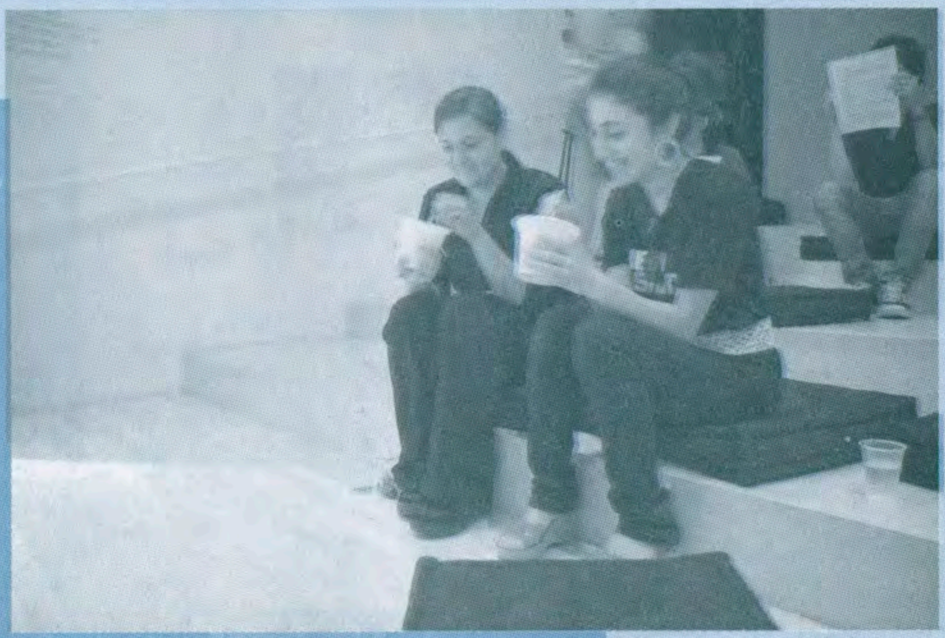
والشيء الثابت الوحيد على شريط الفيديو هو وجوه المارة التي لا تنقطع حيث يدخل بعضهم إلى المجهول ليتلاشى بعد ذلك من وعي الذاكرة البصرية للمشاهدين، والبعض الآخر وجهه مألوف مثله في ذلك مثل التقاطع الذي يكشف عن نفسه ليس فقط كواحد من المناظر الطبيعية الحضرية، ولكنه يشكل أيضا نقطة الالتقاء التي تكون جوهر حياتهم اليومية.

في هذا التقاطع الذي لا يكشف أبعد من الحدود الموجودة على الشاشة، تنحسر المنشورات البصرية العابرة منها والدائمة عن طبقات الحياة التي يحتويها طريقان يؤديان إلى لا شيء، ومع ذلك فهما بلا حدود حال الوصول إليهما. في مفترق طرق الحي الذي تصادمت فيه العوالم وكونت منه طبقات التاريخ والثقافة نوعا خاصا من الثقافة والقصص، يعرض مفترق طرق القاهرة رسما مرئيا مصغرا عن الحياة التي تتكشف في الأنتيكخانة.

I MEET AYMAN (ALSO IN THIS EXHIBITION) ARTIST AND TELL HIM ABOUT MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE RAT! HE SAYS HE IS SORRY FOR ME AND THINKS IT MUST HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT. SOMEBODY MIGHT HAVE TOSSED IT FROM THE ROOF OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT..... I DOUBT IT, SEEMS A BIT TOO MUCH COINCIDENCE ANYWAY I GO HOME AND SHOWER!!
PASSAGE TO KASR EL NIL STREET AND TO LE GRILLON RESTAURANT
RESTAURANT GREEK CLUB. THEY HAVE NEW CHAIRS, NOT VERY COMFORTABLE
1ST FLOOR
AIR FRANCE
GROPPI GOOD CROISSANTS BUT THE SERVICE IS TORTURE (SLOW)
MR TALAAT HARB ECONOMIST (LOOKS LIKE A BORING PERSON)
19:25 I HEAR THE MOSQUES, SING... (SUNSET)
SEVERAL CHARACTERS APPROACH ME FOR THEIR PAPYRUS OR ANTIQUE SHOP. I AM NOT INTERESTED....
BAKERY COPTIC REASONABLE PIZZA
BOOKSHOP NOT VERY GOOD
OLDER MAN, HE WANTS ME TO BUY HIS ROSE, HE SHOWS ME PILLS AND SAYS HE NEEDS TO BUY MEDICINE.. HE DOES LOOK REALLY SICK.
IMPOSSIBLE AMOUNTS OF HIDEOUS SHOES! SO DEPRESSING. (CHEAP LEATHER, AND JUST SO ARABI CHIQUE!
YACOUBIAN BUILDING
ALSO TITLE BY BOOK OF ALAA AL ASWANY ABOUT EGYPT TOLD TROUGH ALL THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THIS BUILDING. (ALSO A FILM)
SIGN MADE OUT OF STEEL (IN THE LOBBY) WITH DUST AND RAGS (DIRTY)
SOPER MARKET STACKED WITH PRODUCTS JUST LIKE THE CITY IS.. LAYER UPON NICE CARPET LAYER OF TUT IN WINDOW
CAIRO KIDNEY CENTRE
RED CAR GETS SCRUBBED
GIRLS SCHOOL
DEAD END CUL DE SAC ALSO ENTRANCE TO ARTIST SPACE (RETIRED)
TOWNHOUSE 30TH APRIL 2008 15:00
I RETURN 19:40 (FEEL DIRTY)
TO THE NILE
BEER SOLD
STOP HERE BUT USED TO RUN ALL THE WAY
THE GRAND VIZIERS DERELICT PALACE
THIS RED PALACE REMINDS ME OF A THEMEPARK BUT WAS BUILT IN THE 19TH CENTURY!
GREEN SHACK SELLS BREAD.
COFFEESHOP I MEET ASHARAF TELLS ME I LOOK LIKE JULIO IGLEAS! WOW HE IS IN HIS 70'S NOW WHAT A COMPLIMENT!
I ALSO MEET ASHARAFS BIG-FRIEND WHO IS PUBLISHING ASWAN ANNE FRANKS DIARY IN ARAB, I TELL HIM I THINK THIS BEAUTIFUL BOOK IS ABOUT THE SEXUAL AWAKENING OF A YOUNG ADULT. THE HIDING IS JUST ANOTHER BACKDROP FOR THE REAL STORY. DONT. KNOW IF HE UNDERSTANDS. WHAT I MEAN. DO YOU?
MAGDI FOTO
WHEN WALK HERE A NICE BREEZE IS FELT
FAMOUS KUSHIERI PLACE (PASTA, BEANS ONIONS AND HOT SAUCE)
PIZZA
ABO TAREK
TAKE AWAY
CARS
GREEN MOSQUE DIRTY BUT STILL PRETTY
TUUUT
TUT
TOET
TWO CARS COLLIDED THE DRIVERS SHOUT AT EACH OTHER.. THEATRE!.
TUT
OLD HOUSE LOOKS LIKE IT CAN TUMBLE OVER ANY MOMENT.
A VERY OLD FIAT (DRY AIR NO RUST!)
CAR SHOPS ACTUALLY THIS WHOLE NEIGBOURHOOD IS CLUTTERED WITH GARAGES COFFEE SHOPS AND RUBLE.
AS I WATCH THE PERFORMANCE A WOMAN WITH A LITTLE BABY ON HER SHOULDER ASKS FOR MONEY TO EAT. (15:48)
GUN SHOP
POMPOUS BUILDING SYNDICATE OF JOURNALIST. OFTEN DEMONSTRATIONS HERE (POLICE IN BLEU BUSES PRESENT.)
TV CREW INTERVIEWS PEOPLE.
JUSTICE DEPT
BIG GARDEN WHERE LAWYERS HAVE LUNCH
SUPREME COURT BUILDING
THE NOISE FROM TRAFFIC IS DEAFENING.... (THREE LAYERS)
ITALIAN INST.
I ENTER BULAQ A WORKING CLASS NEIGHBOURHOOD RUN DOWN AND OVERCROWDED, VERY BALADI (ORDINAIRY CAIRENE) SUDDENLY PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT I WRITE (NOTES FOR THIS DRAWING.) AS IF THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO SO...
A VERY DARK AFRICAN MAN SELLS BLACK PLASTIC BAGS ON THE PAVEMENT FLYOVER)
RAMSES
THE ONLY CLEAN (AND OFTEN WHITE CARS) ARE FOR THE TOURISTS... (ITS A BUBBLE)
FROM A BIG METROPOLIS TO A SMALL VILLAGE IN 5 MINUTES, FEELS ALSO AS IF I TRAVEL IN TIME (BACKWARDS)
SILVER DECORATION ABOVE.
MIRROR SHOP
THE STREET.
A FLOCK OF SHEEP
SECOND HAND SHOES POLISHED LIKE CHILDREN WASHED UP. (HOW SAD...)
STONE FOUNTAIN DRY
GARAGES
SIGN PAINTERS
HERE SITS A MAN DRESSED UP WITH A SHISHA, HE LOOKS LIKE A ONE HIT WONDER ROCK STAR. (FAT AND JADED) AND MELANCHOLIC
HEAR A BIRD SINGING
AS THE STREETS KEEP SLICING UP IN SMALLER STREETS PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!
OLD WALLS CRUMBLE
3 MEN SIT
SMALL TUNNEL UNDER HOUSE (VERY MEDIEVAL) AND DARK. BRRR...
SMALL CHURCH
CHINESE MOTORBIKES ARE SOLD
WHAT IS YOUR NAME? (SOMEBODY ASKS)
SUDDENLY A HIGH BUILDING IN BETWEEN THE SLUMS...
SPLOTCH!
OUT OF THE BLUE I AM HIT BY SOMETHING... IT FIRST HITS THE BACK OF MY HEAD AND FALLS IN FRONT OF ME, IN DISBELIEVE I SEE WHAT HIT ME, ITS A.. DEAD RAT!
I REMEMBER PASSING SOME MEN SMILING SARCASTICALLY, THEY ASKED IF I WAS AN ENGINEER BECAUSE I CARRY A CLIPBOARD TO MAKE NOTES.. AAARGH I FEEL SO DIRTY..... I WALK ON IN SEARCH OF PLACE WHERE I CAN WASH.
TUT
SECOND HAND CLOTHES UNDER BRIDGE
TUT
TO ZAMALEK
THE NILE
DOUBLE DECKER STREET
I RETURN TO THE BIG STREET, BACK TO SAFETY.
WEKALAT EL BALAH SECOND HAND COTTON CLOTHES!
RACKS WITH SHIRTS PANTS ETC. TOO MUCH.
FROM THE U.S AND THE E.U. HOW DOES IT GET HERE? IS THIS 3RD WORLD CHARITY MATERIAL? (ALL QUALITY COTTON FROM EGYPT GETS EXPORTED. AND FINDS ITS WAY BACK HERE....
SLOWLY THE CLOTHES MAKE WAY FOR VEGETABLES THAT ARE SOLD AND THE VEGETABLES MAKE WAY FOR CHINESE MOTORBIKES.. ALL INTERMINGLES LIKE SOUNDS.
SMALL AUBERGINE
WONDERFULL SILVER HATS (FOR KIDS?) ON KART.
ME
YOUNG MAN HOLDS MY ARM A LITTLE TO TIGHT AS HE ASKS MY NAME, HE ASKS FOR BAKSHEESH (SEMI JOKINGLY.) I START ASKING HIM FOR MONEY INSTEAD. THIS MAKES HIM LAUGH HE LETS GO OF MY ARM...
COWS FOR BREAKFAST
RABBIT FOR LUNCH?
PARK OF SAND..
OUT
IN
WALK INTO BUILDING (MARKET) INSIDE IT SMELLS) LIKE IN INDIA (MUSKY..) RECENTLY BUILD...
17:15 I STILL FEEL THE DEAD RAT ON ME ALTOUGH I WASHED MYSELF A BIT. THINKING ABOUT IT IAM SURPRISED I DID NOT GET ANGRY
WOOD SHOPS (PEOPLE DON'T BOTHER ME ANYMORE)
PARKED CARS IN PYAMAS
IT SEEMS THAT PEOPLE WORKING WITH WOOD ARE MORE MANNERED. THEY JUST SMILE AND DO NOT SHOUT AT ME....
LITTLE PARK WITH ONE TREE + STREET LAMP
GAURD IN TOWER..
OFFICIAL BUILDING DONT KNOW WHAT IT IS...
PAINT JOB OUTSIDE SMELLS STRONG AND WRONG.
OLD METAL COLLECTORS
THE NEW (PINK LIGHT BLUE) TURCOMAN
GARAGE IS IT IN USE...
NEW BUS STATION LOOKS TOO BIG.
WHITE MOSQUE
EAST DELTA BUS GOES FROM HERE TO PORT SAID (SUEZ)
1,5 M
EIFEL TOWER ON TOP OF METAL (LOOKS IN BETTER REAL LIVE)
I FALL IN LOVE! FOR AS LONG AS WE PASS (1 MINUTE) EACH OTHER (I DONT LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER) (ME AND THE YUONG WOMAN) SHE LOOKS EGYPTIAN... VERY CHARMING
BIG ROAD TOWARDS RAMSES STATION ALWAYS BUSY I SAY ALWAYS!
DEUTCHE EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE
TUT
TUT
MAN TELLS ME IT IS FORBIDDEN TO MAKE A MAP
Cairo Gateway
SIGN FOR BUS STATION
SIGN ON THE SIDE OF A THEATRE LOOKS LOUD...
BIG BUILDING WITH ARMED GAURDS CANNOT FIND OUT WHAT IT IS (SECRET SERVICE/POLICE?)
STATUE OF BIRD IN STONE IN FRONT OF AL-AHRAM (NEWSPAPER BUILDING STATE OWNED? FEELS LIKE IT.
SORRY BIRD.
PFFF I AM STILL ALIVE....
AMAZING BELLE EPOQUE BUILDING WITH ARCADE. MAKES YOU FEEL SOMEWHERE ELSE.
SUPREME COURT (MASSIVE) MAKES YOU OBEY!
CUPBOARD MOSQUE IN SMALL STREET.
GARAGE
IN THIS STREET BEHIND THE BUILDING A MAN IN A BRIGHT YELLOW (TIGHT) SHIRT GIVES ME THE SMILES (GAY?)
TEXT ON SHIRT: SOUL EDGE (YEA)
ENTREZ LENTEMENT IS WRITTEN INSIDE GARAGE
RIVOLI
CARLTON HOTEL COVERED IN BLACK DUST.
LONG SHADOWS THIS IS THE GOLDEN (LIGHT) HOUR! 18:10
PARKING
IN THE ALLEY ARE FOUR GIRLIE BARS. (BALADI BARS)
BLEU BIRD HOTEL ON THE 6TH FL.
CINEMA Miami
AL AMERICAINE Coffee Shop
BOY SLEEPING ON PAVEMENT
UNDER MC.DONALDS SIGN WITH ARROW SITS A SCALE TO MEASURE YOUR WEIGHT
ADIDAS SHOP (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)
ALLEY WAY
TUT TUT
* HERE IS ANOTHER CINEMA METRO
excelsior
EXCELSIOR THE 1ST SHAWARMA DINER OF THE WORLD. (DRINK BEER HERE SOMETIMES)
GUY SELLING LEATHER BELTS FROM HIS ARM
I SIT HERE BEHIND THE GLASS EATING A SANDWICH. PEOPLE PASS BY REAL CLOSE, THEY DON'T NOTICE ME. AS I SIT HERE I NOTICE THE FOLLOWING....
TOURIST WEAR KHAKI PANTS WITH ZIPPERS ON THE SLEEVES OF THE LEGS (TO ALTER INTO SHORTS..)
MEN WITH PRAYER MARKS ON THEIR FOREHEAD ARE NOT IN THE BEST SHAPE OF HEALTH. (FAT AND PALE) WELL... SOME..
PEOPLE ARE BUSY WITH THEIR MOBILES (WITHOUT CALLING)
THERE IS A FASHION AMONG THE HEADSCARFS, THEY LAYER IT LOOSELY AS IF IT IS HAIR.
MEN STARE UNCOMPROMISINGLY AT WOMAN, GIRLS AND TOURISTS.







Ayman Ramadan, Koshary Min Zamman event, July 10, 2008, at the New Museum. Photo: Carolyn Wachnicki

AYMAN RAMADAN (b. 1980)
Koshary Min Zamman, 2008
Framed photographs, plastic koshary cups, stickers, and posters, dimensions variable

In his installation Koshary Min Zamman, Ayman Ramadan sets up a fictitious koshary shop that features stacks of disposable plastic bowls emblazoned with the restaurant's logo and photographs capturing international political figures eating koshary—a staple carbohydrate meal of the working class in Egypt.

Ramadan's work is layered with meanings, literal and metaphorical. On the one hand, it is a direct reference to the popular practice of local businesses—such as coffee places, restaurants, shops, barber shops—of putting up pictures of their founder on their premises. These pictures are regularly "Photoshopped" to show the founder of the business with a local celebrity (a politician, a famous actor, a singer), hence transforming in the context of Ramadan's work to a commentary on social identity as it plays out in the public arena.

The term *min zamman* (from the past) refers to origin, and therefore ascertains the credibility of a local business. Juxtaposed with this sense of the credible, the trusted, "the known," Ramadan's collocation of the photographs of recognizable international political figures eating koshary in peace negotiations serve to ridicule the effectiveness of these meetings, which like a koshary meal, satiate the appetite very quickly and provide an unfounded feeling of self-satisfaction and contentment. In carefully manipulated photographs, the link between international political negotiations and the ingredients of koshary—marked by their availability, cheapness, and the immediate feeling of satisfaction and apathy in the consumer after its ingestion—is underscored.

In a neighborhood in which koshary is both a staple of life and the source of its birth given its role of "gathering"—people and community—Koshary Min Zamman serves as a microcosm to reflect on and illuminate the nature of Antikhana. In Koshary Min Zamman, exhibition-goers are given a taste and feel of the energy that brings people together in Antikhana, and of the power of the individual to transcend borders through the universal that, in this case, is food.

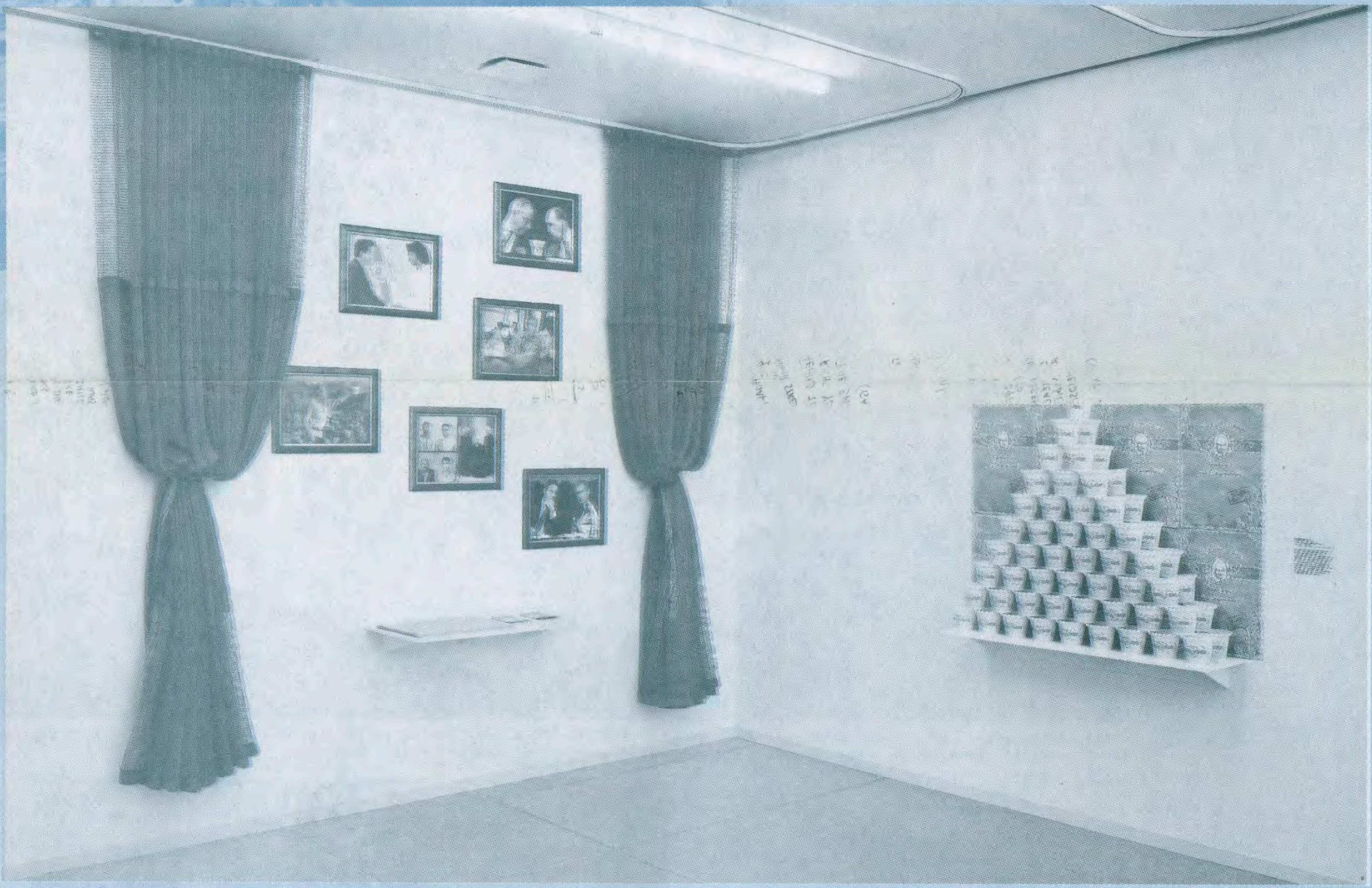
أيمن رمضان (ولد في 1980)
كشري من زمان، 2008
صور فوتوغرافية بإطارات، وعلب بلاستيكية لتعبئة الكشري، ملصقات صغيرة وكبيرة، متعددة الأحجام

في تركيبته كشري من زمان، يقوم أيمن رمضان بتصميم مطعم كشري وهمي يرسم اكوام من السلاطين البلاستيك للاستخدام مرة واحدة مطبوع عليها شعار المطعم، وصور فوتوغرافية لشخصيات سياسية عالمية وهم يأكلون الكشري – وهي وجبة من الاغذية الأساسية الغنية بالكربوهيدريت للطبقة العاملة في مصر.

إن عمل رمضان محمل بالمعاني الحرفية والمجازية. فإنه يعد، من جهة، إشارة مباشرة لممارسة شعبية يقوم بها أصحاب المشروعات التجارية المحلية – مثل المقاهي والمطاعم والمحلات ومحلات الحلاقة – من وضع صور مؤسسيها على أماكن عملهم. عادة ما يعاد تركيب هذه الصور على برنامج الفوتوشوب لتضع صاحب العمل ومؤسسه مع أحد المشاهير المحليين (مثل رجل سياسة أو فنان مشهور أو مطرب) ومن ثم تحول مضمون أعمال رمضان إلى تعليق على الهوية الاجتماعية التي لم يعد لها تأثير في الساحة العامة.

تشير عبارة من زمان (من الماضي) إلى المنشأ وبذلك تؤكد على مصداقية العمل التجاري المحلي. فإذا وضعنا المعنى المقصود من تجميع رمضان لصور فوتوغرافية لشخصيات سياسية عالمية معروفة وهم يأكلون الكشري أثناء مفاوضات السلام جنبا إلى جنب مع هذا الإحساس بالمصداقية والثقة، و «المعروف»، نجد أنه يضفي نوعا من السخرية على فعالية هذه الاجتماعات، مثلها في ذلك مثل وجبة الكشري، حيث تعطي إحساسا سريع بالشبع وتمنح شعورا زائفا بالرضا النفسي والقناعة. وبالتلاعب الدقيق بالصور، نجد أن الصلة بين المفاوضات السياسية الدولية ومكونات وجبة الكشري – المتميزة بوفرتها ورخص سعرها وما تضفيه من شعور سريع بالرضا واللامبالاه على مستهلكيها بعد تناولها – هو ما يجب التأكيد على أهميته.

في الأحياء التي يعد فيها الكشري منتجا غذائياً أساسياً في الحياة ومصدر وجودها لدوره في «تجميع» – الأشخاص والمجتمع – فإن كشري من زمان يعتبر صورة مصغرة للتأمل وإلقاء الضوء على طبيعة حي الأنتيكخانة. في كشري من زمان، يستمتع مرتادو المعارض بتذوق وإحساس بالطاقة التي تجمع الناس سويا في حي الأنتيكخانة، وبقوة الفرد في تخطي الحواجز إلى المعنى العام الذي يمثله هنا هذا الغذاء.



Installation view: Ayman Ramadan, Koshary Min Zamman, 2008. Framed photographs, posters, stickers, and plastic containers, dimensions variable. Courtesy Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, and the artist. Photo: Benoit Pailley

JAN ROTHUIZEN (b. 1968)
The Last Tourist in Cairo, 2006–08
Ink on paper and black-and-white photographs, dimensions variable

The Last Tourist in Cairo, a project by Jan Rothuizen, features hand-drawn maps of his walks in the city, photographs of clay portraits of him made by the local community, and a life-size photograph of the jacket he wore during his walks. Rothuizen's hand-drawn maps mimic the particular way we read cities as we wander through them, as observers and outsiders. And in juxtaposition, installed on the opposite wall of the exhibition, the clay portraits reflect on how he is observed as a foreigner in Cairo.

The Last Tourist in Cairo is both experiment with and contemplation of what it means and what it feels like to traverse a city's streets with no real direction and no real sense of the necessity of the place. In a world in which categorization has dictated even the necessity of the "walk" as a premeditated action with bearings and an end route, in which cities are served as pre-planned, pre-mapped, prepackaged experiences, the travelers of the past, who once graced Cairo, its Nile, and the Alexandria of Durrell, are no longer florets on the landscape but rather a rare and suspiciously mystifying type.

Rothuizen embodies the spirit of the long-lost traveler, reemerging as a modern-day man who goes adrift in the urban landscape that Cairo, "Al-Qahira," now comprises. Spending several months floating freely through the urban sprawl that spans in its identity from the 969 AD to the present day, Rothuizen encapsulates through his work the experience of navigating both an urban landscape, but also, metaphorically, life.

Within his trajectory the natural gravitation towards city points are revealed, and the nature of a hub such as Antikhana, and its attraction to the insider and outsider alike, is partially unraveled.

جان روثويزن (ولد في 1968)
آخر سائح في القاهرة، 8 – 2006
حبر على ورق وصور فوتوغرافية أبيض وأسود، أبعاد متغيرة

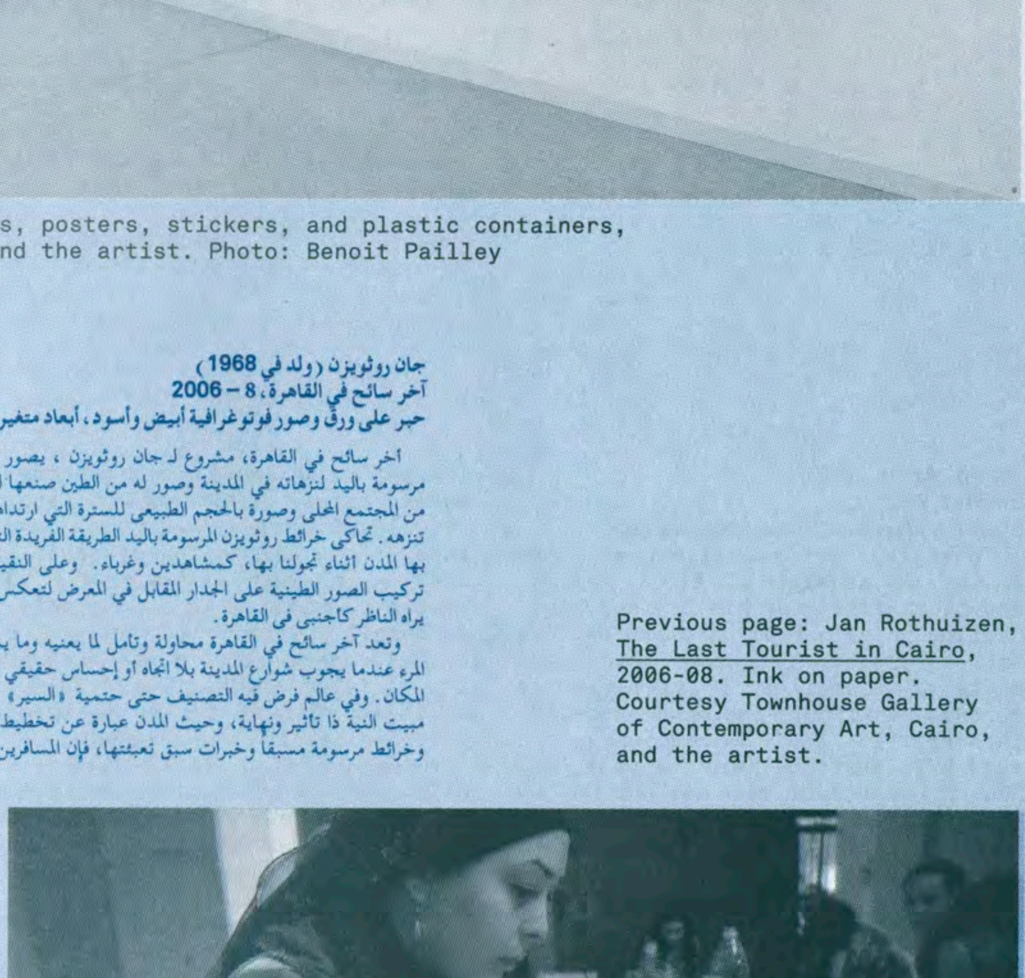
أخر سائح في القاهرة، مشروع لـ جان روثويزن ، يصور خرائط مرسومة باليد لنزهاته في المدينة وصور له من الطين صنعها له أفراد من المجتمع المحلى وصورة بالحجم الطبيعى للسترة التي ارتداها أثناء تنزهه. تحاكى خرائط روثويزن المرسومة باليد الطريقة الفريدة التي نقرأ بها المدن أثناء تجولنا بها، كمشاهدين وغرباء. وعلى النقيض، تم تركيب الصور الطينية على الجدار المقابل في المعرض لتعكس كيف يراه الناظر كأجنبى فى القاهرة.

وتعد آخر سائح في القاهرة محاولة وتأمل لما يعنيه وما يشعر به المرء عندما يجوب شوارع المدينة بلا اتجاه أو إحساس حقيقي بأهمية المكان. وفي عالم فرض فيه التصنيف حتى حتمية «السير» كعمل مبيت النية ذا تأثير ونهاية، وحيث المدن عبارة عن تخطيط مسبق وخرائط مرسومة مسبقاً وخبرات سبق تعبئتها، فإن المسافرين الذين مروا في الماضي بالقاهرة، والنيل، وإسكندرية ديوريل، لم يعدوا زهوراً صغيرة على لوحات المشاهد الطبيعية بل أصبحوا نوعا نادرا محيرا مثيرا للشكوك.

يجسد روثويزن روح المسافر المفقود منذ فترة طويلة، والذي يعاود الظهور كرجل عصري يطوف من غير هدى في المناظر الطبيعية للمناطق الحضرية التي تضمها القاهرة الآن. وبعد قضائه عدة أشهر هائماً بحرية في الضواحي المترامية بلا نظام والتي تمتد هويتها من 969 ميلاديا وحتى اليوم، يعرض روثويزن من خلال عمله ليس فقط تجربة الإبحار في المناظر الطبيعية الحضرية بل يعرض أيضا الحياة بصورة مجازية.

وفي إطار تجواله، يظهر انجذابه الطبيعي نحو مراكز المدينة كما تنكشف جزئيا طبيعة محور مثل الأنتيكخانة وجاذبيته لمن في الداخل والخارج على حد سواء.

Previous page: Jan Rothuizen, The Last Tourist in Cairo, 2006-08. Ink on paper. Courtesy Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, and the artist.



Documentation of Jan Rothuizen's workshop at the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo

Installation view: Jan Rothuizen, The Last Tourist in Cairo, 2006-08. Photographs and ink on paper, dimensions variable. Courtesy Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo and the artist. Photo: Benoit Pailley

Installation view: Tarek Zaki, Untitled, 2008. Plaster and cement, dimensions variable. Courtesy Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, and the artist. Background: Ayman Ramadan, Koshary Min Zamman, 2008. Photo: Carolyn Wachnicki

Installation view: Tarek Zaki, Untitled, 2008. Photo: Benoit Pailley

TAREK ZAKI (b. 1975)
Untitled, 2008
Plaster and cement, dimensions variable

In Untitled, Tarek Zaki explores the themes of passage of time, memory, and presentation of history and past. Casting objects from hardware and DIY stores so as to turn them into fragments of a small-scale city—such as museums, artifacts and monuments—Zaki interrogates how contemporary and future generations read the past, and how are perspectives are shaped by totalitarian forces and agendas.

Through the handmade museum, Zaki challenges the idea of a museum as an institution of historical fact, making it ambiguous and blurred as the objects he exhibits defy conventional categorization. With his subtle artistry Zaki alters the existential state or "presence" of the objects he mimics, hence forcing the viewer to revisit the familiar through an altered paradigm of perspective.

In Untitled, Zaki uses his handmade artifacts and monuments as a metaphor for the conditioned gaze. By questioning the position of the viewer, Zaki plays with perspective and the shifting realities of past, present, and future. By taking everyday objects and sculpting them into precious artifacts that mirror what we have been conditioned to value and place on display, Zaki appeals to viewers' consciousness and perceptive sensibilities, instigating subtle critique of what we have been conditioned to value. In the process, the question of what we associate with artifacts, monuments, and objects of "cultural" significance is raised, and the disconnect between the individual's sense of aesthetic and cultural merit and that of the socially dictated "collective" is prodded.

Through Untitled, Zaki offers provocation through which to explore prisms of individual and collective perspective. He also offers allegorical, if not direct, critique of the totalitarian uniformity of the "artifact," the "museum," "the monument," or the "landmark." Through his own self-constructed artifacts, Zaki takes the viewer on a larger metaphorical journey of meditation and examination of the value system we allow ourselves to adopt. In tandem, he takes us into one of the strata that makes Antikhana what it is: a place in which "the artifact" is conditioned by the people who are drawn to the neighborhood; a place in which the culture is cast from the disparate slivers of selves shared and fused, rather than imposed by the larger system in which they, by default, belong.

طارق زكي (ولد في 1975)
بدون عنوان، 2008
قوالب الجبس والأسمنت، أبعاد متغيرة

والماضي. من خلال تشكيل تكوينات باستخدام معدات وأدوات من متاجر «اصنعها بنفسك» (DIY) ذلك لتحويلها إلى أجزاء من مدينة مصغرة – مثل المتاحف، والمصنوعات اليدوية والآثار – يحاول زكي البحث في كيفية قيام الأجيال المعاصرة والمقبلة بقراءة الماضي وكيفية تشكيل المناظير من خلال قوى وجداول أعمال شمولية.

من خلال هذا المتحف المصنوع يدويا، يقوم زكي بتحدي فكرة المتحف كمؤسسة للحقائق التاريخية، مما يجعلها غامضة وغير واضحة حيث أن التكوينات التي يعرضها تتحدى التصنيف التقليدى. يغير زكي بمهارته الفنية الرقيقة، الحالة الوجودية أو «الوجود» للأشياء التي يقلدها ومن ثم يجبر المشاهد على إعادة النظر في المألوف من خلال نموذج متغير للمنظور.

في بدون عنوان، يستخدم زكي مصنوعاته الفنية اليدوية والآثار كتعبير مجازي للنظرة المتغيرة. وعن طريق التشكيك في وضع المشاهد، يتلاعب زكي بالمنظور والحقائق المتغيرة للماضي والحاضر والمتسقبل. وباتخاذه أشياء من حياتنا اليومية وقيامه بنحتها وتحويلها إلى أعمال يدوية ثمينة تعكس ما كنا مدربين على تقييمه ووضعه للعرض، يلجأ زكي لإدراك المشاهدين وحساسيتهم المدركة وهو بذلك يثير النقد الماهر لما كنا مدربين على تقييمه. وفي هذه العملية، يطرح سؤالاً عما ننسبه إلى الأعمال اليدوية والآثار والأشياء ذات المدلول «الثقافي» كما يحث على الفصل بين احساس الفرد بالجمال والجدارة الثقافية وبين «الجماعية» المفروضة اجتماعيا.

ومن خلال بدون عنوان يقوم زكي بالتحريض على استكشاف مناظير المنشورات البصرية الفردية والجماعية. كما يعرض أيضا النقد المجازي، إن لم يكن المباشر، للاتساق الشمولى «للعمل الفني اليدوي» و«المتحف» و«الأثر» أو «المعلم». فيأخذ زكي المشاهد، من خلال بناءه الذاتي للاعمال الفنية اليدوية، إلى رحلة مجازية أكبر من التأمل واختبار نظم التقييم التي نسمح لأنفسنا باتباعها. وفي الوقت نفسه، يأخذنا إلى إحدى الطبقات التي جعلت من الأنتيكخانة ما هي عليه: فهي مكان تصاغ فيه «الأعمال الفنية اليدوية» وفقا لأهواء الناس ممن يجتذبهم الحي، ومكان تتكون ثقافته من شظايا الأنفس المتفاوتة المشتركة والمدمجة أكثر من كونها مفروضة بفعل النظام الأكبر الذي تنتمي إليه افتراضيا.

Museum as Hub is made possible by the Third Millennium Foundation.

Seeds of Tolerance

With additional generous support from **MetLife Foundation**.

The Townhouse Gallery's presentation for Museum as Hub is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Mondriaan Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Endowment support is provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Skadden, Arps Education Programs Fund, and the William Randolph Hearst Endowed Fund for Education Programs at the New Museum.

Major support for the New Museum's multilingual materials is made possible by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.