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the one and the multiple

An exhibition of artists from Spain and Egypt
La Capella, Barcelona : 14 May 2010 – 03 July 2010

Inauguration 14 May 2010 19h30 : Concert by Ehab Abd El Latif
Open Night 15 May 2010 19h30 : Screenings and concert by Magdi Mostafa
Presentación 18 May 2010 19h30 : Ramon Blecua, Joana Cervia & Pedro Soler
Workshop 15 May → 30 May 2010 : Map Embroidery (Vahida Ramujkic, Aviv Kruglanski + participants)

The 11 artists of this exhibition have all participated in artist exchange programs between institutions in Spain and in Egypt (España<->Egypt). The institutions are very different in both size and scope as are the artists themselves.

The result is a varied and enchanting exhibition, fresh and without complexes, where the social and the aesthetic intertwine with digital and analog tools to generate multiple spaces of representation.

The exhibition features original work by the artists, generally created during their residences, and will be inaugurated on the 14th of May 2010 in La Capella, Barcelona. This space is one of the finest in Barcelona and is managed by the Ajuntament of Barcelona (city council). The exhibition will then travel to Cairo at the beginning of 2011 to be shown in 3 spaces simultaneously (CIC, Townhouse, Artelewa).

Activities around the exhibition in La Capella will include an embroidered map workshop featuring some of the Egyptian collaborators of Vahida Ramujkic + Aviv Kruglanski in their Cairo mapping project and an inaugural concert by Ehab Abd Al Latif, a pioneering Egyptian artist and musician currently living in Catalunya.

A catalogue will be published in Catalan, Arabic, English and Spanish.

Participants :

From Egypt :

Centres : CIC, Townhouse, Artelewa, Medrar

Artists : Tarek Hefny, Shady El Noshokaty, Hamdy Reda + Sameh Ishmael, Magdy Mostafa, Mahmoud Khaled, Ahmed Fathy, Nork Zakarian.

From Spain :

Centres : Hangar, Laboral, CAN Ferrera

Artists : Vahida Ramujkic, Alvaro Sau, La Fundició, Pablo de Soto

Participating institutions :

Hangar, La Capella-ICUB, Laboral, Embajada de España al Cairo, Casa Arabe, AECID, Can Farrera, CIC, Townhouse, Medrar, Institut Ramon Llull.

Curator :

Pedro Soler

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Assisted by :

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Hamdy Reda (Cairo)

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Curatorial note :

This exhibition is born from the program of international exchanges initiated by Ramon Blecua during his service as cultural attaché of the Spanish Embassy in Cairo. Seven institutions participated in the exchange programs - 3 in Spain and 4 in Egypt. The selection of the artists, therefore, was not a task corresponding to the curator but rather the result of a series of different juries who selected from the hundreds of artists who applied for the residencies. This process assures a high artistic quality but is a risk in terms of making an exhibition. The selection can easily be a pot pourri of artists lacking a narrative thread and the necessary compatibility to show in the same space. However, an analysis of the works shows that nothing could be further from the truth and that the selection is actually a surprisingly unified field. This prompted us to choose the subtitle *The One and the Multiple* for the exhibition - referring, on the one hand, to the unity of the field of contemporary art and at the same time its enormous diversity and, on the other, to the inoperability of old ideas of East and West, Orient and Occident. The exhibition, while being at times very site-specific (in the sense of being tightly related to physical spaces) shows that it is not possible to divide the artists following regionalist criteria - instead we must look at each as an individual in the unified space of the Mediterranean or, more widely, of contemporary art.

In formal terms we can see that there is an almost complete absence of painting and sculpture - the principal disciplines being photography and video. Three artists - Wensh, Magdi Mostafa and Nork Zakarian - present interactive audio &/or video installations. Magdi Mostafa is a musician and visual artist who is rapidly making his presence felt on the international scene - his works are site-specific and constantly searching for the creation of new spaces. Wensh and Nork both participated in the Open Lab Egypt interactive video workshops in Cairo and Alexandria organised by Hangar and Medrar in 2009. Wensh, with sound, and Nork, with video, both create spaces where the presence of the spectator is essential to the existence of the work. Each work begins with a door - in the case of Nork this gives space to a play with the sense of vision, when you see one video you lose the other, questioning our ways of being a spectator, making complex our situation with respect to the image and suggesting that the act of seeing implies loss. Wensh creates an audio corridor - using only electronic tools - where a sound is launched by the entry of the visitor and her movement modifies and supplements this sound until, leaving at the other end, the sound has evolved, changed, mutated.

At the other end of the scale, the artisanal work of Hamdy Reda and Sameh Ishmael comes closest to more traditional art techniques - combining the millennial tradition of arabic calligraphy (of which Sameh Ishmael is one of the most prominent contemporary practitioners) with the old camera oscura (or pinhole camera) technique. Sameh writes directly onto the photographic paper before it is developed with evocative architectural studies by Hamdy. Tareq Hefny also focusses his camera's lens on architecture but in his case it is a high end digital camera - with sophisticated techniques he treats buildings in Barcelona and Cairo in the same way, emptying them to mere theatrical backdrops (or "skins" as he calls them). And absence is also in Mahmoud Khaled's "colorful photos of a very classical landscape" installed in an old style cabinet, common in middle and upper class homes for displaying family photos and treasures. The reference to this living room dispositive is twisted by the absence of human presence in the photos. They generate a mysterious space full of

absence, landscapes suggesting an activity that we have just missed, an open air theatre for a play that we have to imagine. The photos were taken in Montjuic during his residence in Hangar, Barcelona.

The video camera of Alvaro Sau searches for presence – he returned from his stay in Egypt with over 70 hours of video recorded. The recordings form part of an ongoing research project called Outdoors (Las Afueras), investigating the spaces (peripheral, rural, "3rd world", both metaphorical and physical) outside the centres of power, searching for other laws and relations and portraying the people who live them - a day in the life of a village family, a monk in a monastery, a meeting of friends around a fire in Siwa.... Pablo de Soto and the group La Fundició use video as a means of documenting their investigations rather than as an end in itself while Shady El Noshokaty turns the camera onto himself, documenting “inside” spaces, or “physiography” as he calls it, from an extreme subjectivity and impossibility.

La Fundició used their residence in Artellewa, in the "informal" district of Ard'ellewa, to work with children from the neighbourhood using creative processes that allow them to analyze their cultural paradigms in relation to others, and develop a positive, active and conscious identity. They applied the same methods in Catalunya with children in the Martinet school in Ripollet. The result is the implementation of a kind of “channel” which links the work of both groups. In addition to the graphic material generated by the children they use video to document and make legible these processes. Pablo de Soto also uses video, amongst other means, to document the investigation he carried out in the city of Rafah - the frontier between Gaza and Egypt. Present during the Israeli attack on Gaza at the end of 2008, The result is a tactical cartography - shown in the exhibition - of the tensions and complexities expressed through this frontier.

Vahida Ramujkic, in collaboration with Aviv Kruglanski, Albino & Rania, also makes use of cartography but as an artisanal presence, slowly embroidered by hand - looping back to the manuality of Hamdy Redy and Sameh Ishmael and echoing the interest of La Fundició, Alvaro Sau and Pablo de Soto in peripheral spaces as micropolitical fractures, places where we can truly learn to see again - "a heightened capacity for observation, for perceiving social dynamics and for learning" as Vahida puts it in the web of the project.

This last phrase can also be seen as describing the effect of going to stay and work in an environment unfamiliar to one – either culturally, physically or intellectually. Indeed it is the art of travel, as Hakim Bey would say. All the projects shown in the exhibition have the act of seeing, discovering, mapping (literally or metaphorically) at their core. They point towards art as a tool where individual subjectivities debate with their environment, trying to make, or not, sense from it.

Interestingly perhaps here we have the reason for the absence of objects indicated at the beginning of this text, there is no creation “ex nihilo”, the works all engage with complex pre-existing physical and social tissues. Cartography, video, photography, the physical presence of the public – these are the tools of this art without frontiers.

Pedro Soler

March 2010



Video still from "Stammer" – Shady el Noshokaty

THE ARTISTS

La Fundició

<http://www.lafundicio.net/>

Cartography + Video

La Fundició is an educational services and cultural production coop formed by a group of people that have been precariously working on this field since 1999.

The artists Mariló and Anne from La Fundició have most recently been working on Canal Canatum , a project in collaboration with kids involved in the Artellewa Centre activities at Ard El Lewa neighbourhood (Giza, Egypt), kids from the Ponent neighbourhoods in Viladecans and students from the El Martinet school at Can Mas neighbourhood (Ripollet) that is structured as a collaborative media research about cultural identities, starting from the representation and research on public and domestic spaces.

They will show domestic and street maps made by the children as well as documentary videos.

Tarek Hefny

<http://www.tarekhefny.com/>

Photography

Tarek Hefny is an Egyptian photographer based in Cairo. He got his bachelor degree with honors in painting from the faculty of fine arts Helwan university 2005.

He participated in several group exhibition showing his work in both painting & photography. It was after his graduation that he started his own business as a commercial photographer, and now established himself as one of the rising names in advertising in Egypt.

His personal art projects take a different path than his commercial work, he focuses mainly on the modern urban life and its effects on the city. immersed in the intense life in cairo all his life most of his work revolve around the relation between man & the place he lives in. His current work tries to develop a new technique to understand the city around us through analyzing the urban textures.

latest exhibitions:

- 2008 "24 hores" CASM, Barcelona Spain
- 2008 "IMAFY" palace of arts, Cairo Egypt
- 2008 "booster project" ACAF, Alexandria, Egypt
- 2008 "tales around the pavement" chp.2 CIC, Cairo, Egypt
- 2007 "Malash-Kairo" Meinblau, Germany

In La Capella he will show a series of flattened architectures, comparing and contrasting Cairo and Barcelona.

Mahmoud Khaled

<http://www.mahmoudkhaled.com/>

Photography

Lives and works in Alexandria, Egypt, where he also studied painting, graduating with a BFA in 2004. He is the recipient of a number of residencies including the Funen Art Academy, Odense, Denmark, Gasworks, London and the Montalvo Arts Center, California. Khaled's approach to art-making is both process oriented and multidisciplinary, producing works in video, photography, text, and site specific installation.

Most of his projects have at their core a thorough exploration of the document, in its many variations of official, social, historical, and personal. Khaled makes use of video, found objects, and various photographic resources, to test the boundaries between the personal, the political, the historical and the social domains. His projects tend to examine the often coded and powerful socio-political trajectories that run through our daily lives.

In the exhibition he shows "colorful photos of a very classical landscape" installed in an old style cabinet, common in middle and upper class homes for displaying family photos and treasures. The reference to this living room dispositive is twisted by the absence of human presence in the photos. They generate a mysterious space full of absence, landscapes suggesting an activity that we have just missed, an open air theatre for a play that we have to imagine. The photos were taken in Montjuic during his residence in Hangar, Barcelona.

Magdi Mostafa

<http://magdimostafa.com/>

<http://www.myspace.com/magdimostafa>

Sound Installation

Graduated in Digital Arts from Helwan University in 2007, he has been involved in the field of multimedia and music since 2000. In 2006 he created a sound installation for the Library of Alexandria and in 2007 he received the Youth Salon Grand Award with an the only electronic installation. In 2008 he was a resident in Hangar's laboratory and played in the 100 Live Electronic Music festival in Cairo. He now wants to start a label for local talent and to continue his

investigations in the interstices of visual and audio arts.

He will create a site specific sound installation especially for the exhibition.

Shady el Noshokaty

<http://www.noshokaty.com/>

Video

Born in Dammieta - egypt 1971. Lives and works in Cairo, Egypt. Graduated from the faculty of art education, Helwan University in 1994, he achieved his PhD degree with a thesis titled "Media art and new Egyptian identity" in 2007.

He combines his work as an art teacher at Helwan University and the American University with an intensive artistic activity.

While famous for his figurative paintings, he has in the last few years developed artworks that involve not only drawings or paintings, but also include installations , performance and videos. He has exhibited in many local and international exhibitions since 1995 .

<http://www.noshokaty.com/bio.html>

In La Capella he will show his video "Stammer" – a performance about the impossibility of communication. (see video still at the beginning of this section)

Hamdy Reda + Sameh Ishmael

<http://samehismael.com/>

<http://hamdyreda.com>

Photography + Calligraphy

Hamdy Reda is a well-known visual artist in the Egyptian artistic arena born in 1972 in Cairo and graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Helwan in 1997. His background as a painter as well as his experiments with photography forms a very solid artistic foundation for his artwork – seen in his use of composition, lighting, and color. And he is famous for his bilateral dialogues with other artists, from his Egyptian colleges or from abroad, he have build with the cooperation with those artist a lot of exciting dialogues.

Hamdy Reda's work reflects an image of Egypt with its many contradictions – beauty and ugliness, wealth and poverty, modernity and underdevelopment. His images are created with a local Egyptian eye, but are adept at communicating with the international art scene. Hamdy Reda's work has been exhibited at many venues within Egypt as well as around the world, and he is a recipient of various artistic awards, which, together with the interest of art critics in his work, is evidence of his high profile as an artistic talent.

Sameh Ishmael is a calligrapher very well known in Egypt. He lives and works in Cairo. Together with Hamdy Reda they have created a unique series of pieces combining pinhole photography with calligraphy written directly onto the photographic paper. These pieces will be shown in E->E.



Embroidered Map of Cairo – Vahida Ramujkic & collaborators.

Vahida Ramujkic

<http://rotorrr.org>

Cartography

Vahida was born in a country that no longer exists, in a mixed orthodox/muslim marriage raised in communist manner. Autistic as young child, she spent days drawing with head to the floor. That's how she became blind on the left eye.

From 2001 in collaboration with Laia Sadurni she initiates duo-collective Rotorrr (www.rotorrr.org). Getting out to the street, in search for adventures Rotor produce temporary maps, organise erratic events, connects and translates in order to understand relations between individuals and their immediate surrounding. Retrospectively in its trajectory (2001-2007) Rotor

distinguishes three phases in its evolutionary development: **Terrestrial** (Explorations, Safaris and Planariae Poble Now; Sculpture Climbing Olympics of Barcelona '02, Singing the street; Topographic games, GPS manual, Loi, loi, loisir, etc), **Aquatic** (Turn the barriere, manual for constructing rafts in urban areas and navigation routs) and **Aereal** (opening aerial routes in Ciutat Vella de Barcelona, Vincles ALTTerats; Festival of AirAutonomy; Instant Ladder, etc.).

Years of experience in navigating bureaucratic structures in order to become european citizen, in 2006 conclude in a text book Schengen with ease, where step by step is are given all situations a foreigner could meet in attempts to assimilate in to in to new community.

Some other projects she was developing until present are: Disputed Histories Library, collection of history text books in former Yugoslav countries; Documentary embroidery, with Aviv Kruglanski, or how we got to conclusion that embroidery is the most accurate technique to document reality; Storm, return home, or in what relationship stands a ones living experience, a landscape and the stories; Living outside, how we can get practical knowledge just from ourselves and our environment in more intuitive way, etc.

During her residence she produced a book, Cairo Diary, and, in collaboration with Aviv Kruglanski, initiated a collective mapsewing workshop. It is this latter project that will be shown in La Capella as well as a workshop inviting Cairo participants to perform the same action in Barcelona.

<http://weaveandconstruct.ning.com/>

Alvaro Sau

<http://labcuatro.blogspot.com/>

Video

Visual artist living and working in Barcelona. From 2004 he has been principally working in the field of audiovisuals – projections, vj, installations etc – in the Labcuatro collective.

At the Capella the artist will present the videos created during his residence in CIC in which he explores “las Afueras” (Outdoors).

pablo de Soto

<http://hackitectura.net>

Cartography + video

Artist, researcher and developer of prototypes in the fields of media-architecture, cybernetics, social and civic mapping, he graduated as architect from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. Co-author of the Critical cartography of the Strait of Gibraltar” and coeditor of the book “Fadaiat: freedom of movement, freedom of knowledge”. Has proposed and directed “Emerging Geographies” for the second edition of the meeting Technology, Creativity, Society in

Extremadura. Winner of the awards LAB_Cyberspaces 2007 and LAB_Joven Expermienta 2008 from Laboral Centro de Arte y Creacion Industrial.

Together with Sergio Moreno and José Pérez de Lama he is part of the kernel of hackitectura.net, a networked office of architects, hackers and social activists experimenting in the emergent territories of cyborg spatiality composed by the recombination of physical space, networks and bodies. He is urrently editing the book "Situation Room: Designing a prototype citizen Situation Room".

While in residence at Townhouse in Cairo he developed a cartographic project of the frontier between Egypt and Palestine which he will be showing in the exhibition:

<http://rafah.hackitectura.net>

Nork Zakarian

http://hangar.org/wikis/lab/doku.php?id=start:nork_zakarian

Interactive Video

Graduate from the American University in Cairo in Spring 2009 with 5 courses in film and video. Developing a career as an independent filmmaker in Egypt. He has produced a number of experimental videos both independently and in collaboration with other renowned artists like Sherif el Azma. He also has a 6 year background in music and have produced a number of electronic, ambient, new age audio tracks with electronic musician Ahmed el Azma, in which he composes and plays the guitar.

"The project that I worked on is influenced by the phenomenon of a mutated viewer in post modernity; and though the interactive technology (pure data) is utilized minimally, it is the main catalyst of the concept. It is specifically designed for a video art installation and I will be using my own original video works. In this installation I intend to mobilize and perturb the 'viewers' by altering the videos that are played based on their presence in a room. When a visitor enters the room that was already screening a video of a similar-looking room, his/her presence is detected triggering a stop of the video while simultaneously activating another projection on the door outside (shots of outdoors wild nature). As the visitors are prompted to move out of the room to catch the spectacle on the door, that video also stops, and the indoor video resumes back in the room. It's only normal to miss outdoor spectacles when you are dormant and confined to an indoor space.

The visitors are obliged to stand outside of the room and view the video from the outside as if looking through the transparent wall of a home. The only way to witness the spectacle at the door is by being a bystander (a passerby observer). This interactive installation alerts its viewers of voyeuristic presence and also raises essential awareness to the reality of the eye, and its relation, extension, subtraction, or autonomy from that of the camera's."

Ahmed Fathy (Wensh)

Interactive Audio

Multifaceted graffiti artist and musician from Alexandria. Wensh presents a sound project consisting of an empty room with two doors, each connected to a mixer . The sensor on the first door launches a loop and each subsequent visitor launches a new loop. The sensor on the second door deletes a loop. A sensor in the middle manipulates the loops already playing.

The result is an audioscape that depends entirely on the visitors actions.

THE CENTRES

EGYPT

Contemporary Image Collective

<http://www.ciccairo.com/>

Exchange with Hangar.

Artists : Vahida Ramujkic, Alvaro Sau

The Contemporary Image Collective (CiC) is an independent non-profit arts initiative founded in Cairo, in 2004, by a group of visual artists and professional photographers. CiC works to create a platform for production, exhibition, dissemination, research, education and exchange.

Over the years, CiC has sought to engage a wide range of local and international cultural producers, in an attempt to enhance and augment local artistic production and discourse.

Exhibitions, photography courses, film screenings, performances, lectures and workshops are held regularly. CiC also offers local, regional and international artists and researchers the opportunity for collaboration and exchange within the framework of a studio/residency program.

Townhouse Gallery

<http://www.thetownhousegallery.com/>

Exchange with Laboral

Artist : Pablo de Soto

The Townhouse Gallery is a space for independent arts, aimed at promoting contemporary arts within the Middle East region and internationally.

The three floor building, adjoining annex and 650 meter converted factory space house exhibition halls showcasing new contemporary works, classrooms, a library and six studios.

The gallery hosts theatre and experimental music performances, as well as film screenings, public lectures and workshops.

Artellewa

<http://www.artellewa.blogspot.com/>

Exchange : CAN Farrera

Artist : La Fundició

Artellewa space for contemporary art is an independent, non-profit project, initiated in January 2007 by Hamdy Reda with support from Friends: artists, sociologists, journalists.

Comprising a studio and apartment for visiting artists and a small street level exhibition space, it is located in Ard El Lewa, a residential area in the northwest of Giza, situated west of the railway , which is one of the outskirts-local areas of Greater Cairo.

Medrar for Contemporary Art

<http://medrar.org>

Exchange : OLE program in collaboration with Hangar

Artists : Ahmed Fathy (Wensh) & Nork Zakarian

<http://medrar.org/ole.html>

Medrar for Contemporary Art is a common cultural corporate and philanthropic platform for young emerging artists based in Egypt.

It aims to contribute to the motivation of different means of communication, developing experiences and financial support for contemporary praxis on the national, regional and international level.

Medrar aims to drive the interest of young emerging artists and provide them with chances of experimentation and accession by encouraging their activities and the intercultural exchange between them globally, as well as creating a space for dialogue between young art critics by producing serial prospectuses and critique researches and providing data base for curatorial based projects.

Having curated and organised numerous exhibitions and festivals they initiated their workshop activity in 2008 with the OLE interactive art cycle in Alexandria and Cairo. 2 artists from this cycle will be chosen by a jury to participate in the exhibition.

Located in a downtown office space, they are currently developing a community medialab for Cairo artists.

SPAIN

Hangar

<http://www.hangar.org>

Exchange : Contemporary Image Collective

Artists : Tarek Hefny, Mahmoud Khaled

Exchange : Summerlab Laboral + Hangar Lab

Artist : Magdi Mostafa

Hangar is a centre for arts production and research, set up by the Association of Visual Arts of Catalonia (AAVC) in 1997. It provides support facilities for artists and designers and offers services adapted to production needs associated with the arts world.

The centre is housed in refurbished industrial premises in the Poblenou neighbourhood of Barcelona. Its 1,800 m² includes 15 individual studios, Medialab, 2 film sets, an equipment rental service, technicians and consultancy and advice on production. In addition to its international exchange programme, Hangar also offers production grants and a series of training workshops for artists.

The centre is subsidised mainly by the Catalan Government and Barcelona City Council, and is managed by the AAVC Foundation.

CAN Farrera

<http://www.farreracan.cat/>

Exchange : Artellewa

Artist : Hamdy Reda, Sameh Ismael

El Centre d'Art i Natura de Farrera is a work residence for artists and researchers from all over the world. Situated at an altitude of 1,360 m in the heart of the Catalan Pyrenees, 250 km from Barcelona and not far from Andorra, the village of Farrera (25 inhabitants) benefits from an exceptional and peaceful setting ideally suited to reflection, inspiration and creative work, whether individual or in a group.

Apart from its residential service, the Centre d'Art i Natura (CAN) organises grants and exchanges, courses and seminars, exhibitions of works from its art collection, publications and original editions, as well as performances and presentations.

Farrera's CAN, which has been in operation since 1996, is a public initiative for local development

at the service of creativity and research. The CAN is owned by the local council and administered by a non-profit association, the Friends of the Centre d'Art i Natura de Farrera. From the outset, the CAN has actively participated in the International Association of Residential Arts Centres and Networks (Res Artis), and it is also a founding member of the Network of Spaces for Art Production in Catalunya.

Laboral

<http://www.laboralcentrodearte.org/>

Exchange : Townhouse Gallery

Artist : Shady el Noshokaty

LABoral Art and Industrial Creation Centre is an exhibition centre for art, science, technology and advanced visual industries. But it is also a venue for artistic and technological production, research and training; and for the dissemination of new forms of art and industrial creation. To fulfil these goals, laboral will be a space for exchange between different art disciplines; a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary centre and a dynamic environment for creators / works / researchers / teachers / audiences.

Organically, the centre depends on a non-profit foundation comprising corporations and institutions, founded expressly to ensure the intellectual and financial feasibility of the centre. The project was developed under the auspices of the Government of the Principality of Asturias, promoter of the conversion of part of the building originally designed as workshops for the former Gijon vocational training centre. The refurbishment of the 14338 square metres of functional space for the centre required an investment in excess of €11 million.

Asturias' industrial tradition and the universal vocation of its people make this region the perfect location for this unique space for artistic exchange which wishes to forge an alliance of art, industry and economic growth.