

OIB ORIENT
INSTITUT
BEIRUT

المعهد الأوربي للأبحاث الشرقية

INVERTED WORLDS

congress
on cultural
motion
in the arab region
4-8 october 2012



Artists, activists and academics engage in debate and exchange during this 5 day international conference in Beirut.

INVERTED WORLDS CONGRESS ON CULTURAL MOTION IN THE ARAB REGION Beirut, 4-8 October 2012

The Orient-Institut Beirut is delighted to welcome you to **Inverted Worlds – Congress on Cultural Motion in the Arab Region**. Please join us in our efforts to highlight the creative side of recent change in the region!

Inverted Worlds aims to explore arenas and manifestations of cultural change effective in the eventful and disruptive outbursts of the Arab spring. It addresses the manners and means of articulation and self-imaging, the medial catalysts of change, the framing that encourages both mobilization and individual action towards change, the tools and inspirations of nonviolent resistance. The metaphor of inversion relates to both the moment when established orders were toppled, and the momentum carrying cultural change in the region. **Inverted Worlds** is also a contribution to the free spirit so characteristic of Beirut. Over the five days of the congress, artists, activists and academics engage in debate and exchange.

The OIB, based in a traditional mansion in Zokak el-Blat/Beirut, supports historical and contemporary research on the Middle East and the Arab world in cooperation with researchers and academic institutions throughout the region. It is part of the “Max Weber Foundation – German Humanities Institutes Abroad”. To find out more about the OIB, please visit our website: www.orient-institut.org.

KEYNOTE: Elias Khoury
Thursday, 4 October 2012, 7pm, Orient-Institut Beirut (Zokak el-Blat)

Journalist, literary critic, novelist, dramaturge. Elias Khoury was born in Beirut in 1948. He studied history and sociology at the Lebanese University in Beirut and in Paris. Khoury supported the interests and rights of Palestinians and worked at the PLO Research Center in Beirut in the 1970s and published *Shu'un filastiniya* (Palestinian Affairs) together with the Palestinian lyric poet Mahmud Darwish. In 1979, as editor for literature, he switched to the daily paper *As-Safir*, where he worked until 1991. Since 1992 Khoury has been publisher and editor-in-chief of the culture and literary supplement to Beirut's daily paper *An-Nahar*. Elias Khoury is considered one of the leading contemporary Arabic intellectuals and writers. His literary work includes eight novels, including *al-Jabal al-Saghir* (1977), *Rahlat Gandhi al-Saghir* (1991), and *Abwab al-Madinah* (1993). The novel *The Kingdom of Strangers* (1996) shows the Lebanese capital as the scene of warring historical and political powers, as the scene of the Israeli-Lebanese war, which breaks apart at the seams of its various ethnic groups, languages, and religions during the civil war. His novel *Bab Al-Shams* (1998) was translated into Hebrew and received the *Palestine Prize*. It was named Best Book of the Year by *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and a Notable Book by *The New York Times* and *The Kansas City Star*. A novel was thereby honoured that told of the Palestinian exodus and the life of the Palestinian refugees in the Lebanese camps. Khoury's novels have been translated into numerous languages. His recently released *As Though She Were Sleeping* was shortlisted for the *Guardian's 2011 Book of the Year*. He also is the author of numerous plays, which have been performed, among other places, in Beirut, Cairo, Paris, and Vienna. Since 2001, Elias Khoury is global distinguished professor at New York University (NYU), and since 2011 he is the editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

GRAFFITI INSTALLATIONS by Rana Jarbou

Rana Jarbou recently embarked upon a calling in artistic expression, leaving behind a background in banking and finance. Her latest project had her travel across 12 Arab countries documenting graffiti in an attempt to give voice to society's silent cries. Her book, “Arabian Walls” will be published Spring 2013. The motivations identified during the study include: Identity, Religion, Politics, Love, Freedom, Idolatry, Social commentary, Pop-culture, Palestinian solidarity, Feminism and Football. The Arab Uprisings of 2011 witnessed a shift in common motivators as the revolutionary mantra was contagious and the cacophony in the Arab world was expressed through urban discourse. Rana introduces her project: “Due to an increased spatial awareness of the territorial divide in Lebanon post the July war 2006, followed by Bahrain's political dissent manifest through the very same medium, in a village where I resided, a clearly defined mission was to document the common as well as different motivators for people using this medium, the walls, as a means of establishing a better understanding of the labyrinthine Arab identity. For an obscurely defined panethnicity, “Arabian Walls” visualizes a journey capturing a transitional period while it aims to redefine the Arab world through a different lens, through its walls.”

INVERTED WORLDS – A NIGHT OF INDEPENDENT ARAB SHORT FILMS
Friday, 5 October 2012, 8:45pm, St Nicolas Stairs (Gemmayzeh)

This film night on the stairs of St Nicolas in Gemmayzeh (Daraj al-Fann) screens a collection of independent short films from across the Arab region curated by **Racha Najdi**. These films from before and during the Arab spring engage with social concerns that have been prevalent across the region but only recently come to the surface. They are independent films, not feature-length and often experimental, showing snapshots of social realities. Join us in our journey of **Inverted Worlds**.

KHAT THALETH – HIP HOP CONCERT
Sunday, 7 October 2012, 9:30pm, Metro Al Madina (Hamra)



Khat Thaleth or “Third Rail” is a project that has gathered a broad cross-section of the most conscious and innovative Arab hip hop artists from the Middle East and Diaspora to give them a platform for free expression of their thoughts about the on-going revolutionary changes in the region.

The project is headed and produced by Ahmed Khouja (Dub Snakkr/Munaqresh) – a DJ/producer from Stronghold Sound (www.strongholdsound.com), a San Francisco-based music label he began in 2009 that specializes in cutting-edge hip hop, reggae, African, Arab and Latin-influenced music production. Also involved with the project is music journalist/filmmaker Jackson Allers (www.worldhiphopmarket.com) and film documentarian Makram Halabi. This third concert in the series will celebrate the near-conclusion of the recording process that has been taking place since autumn 2011. Currently in its final stages of production, Khat Thaleth brings together the poetic and musical skills of artists from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Iraq using their original material and live collaborative performances as the basis for the compilation. For more information contact info@strongholdsound.com.

The line-up includes: Klay BBJ (Tunisia), El Far3i (Jordan), La Tlateh (Syria), Osloub (Palestine/Lebanon), Touffar (Lebanon), El Rass (Lebanon), Munaqresh (Syria/USA) (Note: artist line-up may change due to availability and visa conflicts).

The title of the project refers to two concepts underlying the message behind the music. The first refers to the polarized ideological climate that exists in the region at present. One in which opposing sides to each movement, or change, in any country, are not hard to find and in which propaganda is in no short supply. The tendency in such a climate is therefore to convince or be convinced of one of the opposing sides, for surely one is the 'right' one. But the reality is that the situation, politically, culturally and ideologically is much more complex and there are many contradictions that are becoming apparent in either side one finds themselves. The invitation of the idea of Khat Thaleth is for each person to find their 'un-aligned' truth between these various established sides. The second reference of the compilation is that of the Hejaz railway, which for a period of time represented a pan-Arab method of travel and connection, where one could travel from Damascus to Haifa, Nablus, Amman, Basra and Medina, among other stations, without leaving the ground. The ease of such travel is a harsh contrast to the strong border divisions that mark the region presently.

Khat Thaleth is made possible in part through the help of AFAC Express (Arab Fund for Arts and Culture), and the concert is organised with the support of the Orient-Institut Beirut as part of **Inverted Worlds** and in coordination with SHARE Beirut.

PANEL SESSIONS

Friday to Monday, 5-8 October 2012, various locations across Beirut

**ALSO HAPPENING: SHARE Beirut –
Internet, Activism, Culture (5-7 October)**



SHARE Beirut is taking place on the weekend of **Inverted Worlds**, and since it is all about sharing, we have decided to join forces and hold our Sunday session in the Beirut Art Center, right next to Solea V where Share Beirut is taking place. SHARE Beirut is a weekend-long public, free and non-commercial hybrid event blending an Internet culture and technology related daytime conference with dynamic cutting-edge music festival by night. It will bring together hundreds of passionate people, forward-thinkers, cultural creatives, activists and artists from Lebanon as all around the world for talks and parties in 72 hours of powerful gathering to share ideas, knowledge and creativity.

The lectures and talks will be given by leading international stars in the fields of Internet culture, society, technology, music and new media, world-class bloggers and artists who will educate the audience on new forms of activism and approaches in using advanced technologies and the latest tools to create, influence and affect. Discussions will delve deep into the underground of the Internet subcultures and explore groups that fight for digital and human rights, free information flow and access, improving transparency, and protecting the privacy of fellow peers and residents. The event will be accompanied by an intensive music program, which will be simultaneously organized in several well-selected clubs and alternative venues in Beirut. Contributors and visitors who obtain one of 1500 unique free wristbands will get access to both day and night events where many local, regional and international artists will perform for audiences who will share vibes and energy to celebrate the Internet as open and free territory for all. **Inverted Worlds** wristbands (obtainable at each morning's registration session) also allow access to Share events.

SOUND MESSAGES: POPULAR MUSIC AND SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

aims to come up with new questions and to open a debate on the "air" of the Arab Spring in the context of current regional transformations. Music is a vehicle for political, social and cultural ideas, be it through popular art productions dedicated to Arab nationalist and patriotic movements, or polemical or even subversive lyrics. What have artists of the young generation set out to fight for?

SPEAKERS

Part I: Friday, 5 October, 11:30-2:30, Bibliothèque Orientale, Université St Joseph (Ashrafieh)

**Yves Gonzalez-Quijano (Université Lumière Lyon II):
ARAB RAP: A CULTURE OF REVOLUTION AND A REVOLUTION IN CULTURE**

The nomination of Tunisian rapper El General among Time Magazine selection of the "100 most influential people in the world" for year 2011 tells a lot about a very biased Western perception of the so-called Arab Spring, at is quite naive to postulate a direct link between the political events and the surge of new musical forms in the Arab world. Indeed, in places like Morocco for instance, hip hop and rap music have appeared more than two or three decades ago. Present in various Arab societies "from the Atlantic to the Gulf", this musical phenomenon combines today common characteristics with, at times, very distinctive features. Adapting themselves to the various local contexts, rap music expresses concerns that embrace the whole political spectrum from the leftist fringes to the less expected Islamic circles. But the real challenge for Arab rappers is not necessarily the political or ideological one: "sampling" various cultural traditions, they provide the best example of a cultural hybridization which rephrases the unsolvable (false) dilemma between authenticity and modernity in the Modern Arab culture. Adopted by young audiences targeted by the local and global media and entertainment industries, rap music in the Arab world tells us less about a culture of revolution than a revolution in culture.

**Mark LeVine:
"SCRIPTING" THE REVOLUTION: MUSIC, MOVEMENT, AND THE ARAB SPRING'S AURATIC MOMENTUM**

Music has played an undeniable role in the youth-led uprisings in the Arab world that began in Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Bahrain, Morocco, Libya, Syria and half a dozen other Arab countries in the last 18 months. Although the most well known examples of the new "revolutionary" music – at least in the West – have been inspired by popular styles such as hip hop or pop/rock, traditional musical and poetic genres and aesthetics have also played an important role in the creation of the current revolutionary oeuvre across the region. Bringing together Barthe's seminal critique of authorship with the seminal Frankfurt School debates on the culture industry and the possibility (and even desirability) of a return of the aura, my paper will explore the dynamics underlying the creation, circulation, and reception of some of the most important music produced during the pro-democracy upsurges that began in late 2010. Covering the music of artists in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine and Bahrain, I explore the myriad ways in which supposedly "traditional" and "modern" styles have intersected, how musicians and musical artists from different genres have interacted in previously unaccustomed ways, the intersection of public performance in revolutionary spaces such as Tahrir or Pearl roundabouts or Bourguiba Boulevard and the circulation of revolutionary music on the internet, and how the mass circulation of (largely) uncommodified, digitally (re)produced music is bringing the "aura" back to music in a way that increases its political saliency and social power. I also explore how the artists in these countries have changed their approaches to writing and distributing their music in the wake

of the protest movements and uprisings in which they've participated, and explore the conditions in which artists transcend their music to become broader public intellectuals, especially when marginalized youth see them as representatives of their generation.

**Jackson Allers (Cultural Writer and filmmaker):
ARAB HIP HOP – RHYMES AND REVOLUTION**

Like a scratched up 45-rpm/7" record, the purveyors of the Arab hip hop movement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have been repetitive about the nature of the messaging. From Tunisia to Jordan, to Lebanon and Libya, from Syria and back to Palestine, Arab hip-hoppers have been producing for their insular fanbase(s) with lyrics that pre-saged the rhetoric of the so-called Arab Spring. But they developed in the shadows. They spoke more about the theft of Palestine, or the plight of the disenfranchised, and the corruption of the ruling classes rather than the idea of mass rebellion sparked by the self-immolation of Mohamed Al-Bou'ziz in December 2010. The backbone was their reliance on the beats. And to this end, the movement's rhythmic signposts grew from the mimicry of the Western, Afro-influenced 4x4 rhythm structure to a very homegrown distillation of the Tarab melodies and beat structures of their musical forebearers – with SP-808 sampler effects taken from the wealth of Arab records made in Egypt and Lebanon for decades prior to cassettes and CD's. But the revolutions didn't change the movement. If anything, the revolutions helped the movement serve notice to the West and to the corporate entities that would exploit the talent coming from the Arab hip hop movement - "they need no validation from anyone but themselves and their growing fanbase." Indeed, the lyrical and musical litmus tests within the Arab hip-hop movement have evolved to be "about" the social messaging, and about the innovations of homegrown sampling than about money or fame. Who are the main actors in the pan-Arab hip hop movement? Is there a Pan-Arab hip hop movement? What real impact will Arab hip hop have on the shaabi audience or the mainstream? Can it or has it affected revolution in the region? Will the next battles of free expression be fought by members of the Arab hip hop movement? These are all questions that, in the very least, deserve debate.

**Nicolas Puig (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement / CEMAM, USJ):
CRITICAL SOUNDS FROM THE PERIPHERY: PALESTINIAN ELECTRO IN LEBANON**

The variety of musical imaginaries in Palestinian camps of Lebanon echoes the distinctive ways in which Palestinian worlds are connected to international cultural flows. Isolated and stigmatized by part of the local population, discriminated against, both spatially and socially, Palestinians in Lebanon are part of globalized cultural flows, which they adapt within their own particular conditions. Considered from this perspective, they compensate – both inside and outside of the camps – the decline of national artistic productions by exploring new esthetic, and by creating through this process the conditions for their integration into the musical and political circulation. Among these cultural paths, electronic music (or electro) is one of the newest. By composing rap and electro and musical poetry, these musicians negotiate a place to be in tune with the contemporary world. As a new generation of Palestinian artists, they create writings that open political spaces as well as new modalities of individual and collective subjectification. These writings reshape the local presence by using transnational networks and selected samples from different spaces and times. I will focus on the case of "Studio Katibé", a place near Burj al-Barajné camp where "Osloub" ("Style" in Arabic), rappers of Katibé Khamsé and different musicians are pursuing their innovative aesthetic work. Jean-Luc Godard said that fiction is for Israelis and documentaries for Palestinians. Can the way some Palestinian artists create their own fiction point to the emergence of new voices from the worldwide periphery as well as from the Arab periphery? Like the recent uprising in the Arab countries, one of the meanings of these explorations is that they are an attempt to redraw the cartography of world hegemonies or, at least, a way to engage with the contemporary moment.

Part 2: Saturday, 6 October, 4-7pm, Gulbenkian Theatre, Lebanese American University (Hamra)

**Ines Dallaji (University of Vienna):
TUNISIAN RAP MUSIC AND THE ARAB SPRING: REVOLUTIONARY ANTHEMS AND POST-REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCIES**

During the so-called Jasmine Revolution at the beginning of 2011, rap music emerged as an important means to express people's discontent with the political and social situation in Tunisia. Some Tunisian rap songs, especially the songs of El Général, a young rapper who dared to openly criticise Ben Ali's regime, have even become anthems of the protest movements all over the Arab World and gained attention in the Western media. This paper will summarize the role of rap music during the Tunisian revolution and deal with Tunisian rap music as a reflection of political, social, cultural and religious tendencies and transformation. It will focus on the artistic creation of Tunisian rap singers and how they have been using rap music as a means of expression from the revolution until now. In this context it will be important to consider, for example, whether the topics of their songs, the audience they intend to reach or their attitudes towards certain social, political and religious issues have changed since the revolution. These items will be dealt with by reference to El Général, who has already been mentioned, and Balti, who had been Tunisia's most famous rap singer before El Général gained national and international recognition for his protest songs, especially for his song *ayis li-Blad* ("Head of State"). In order to properly describe the connection between their artistic creation and social, political, cultural or religious transformation, it will be necessary to compare the topics of their revolutionary songs with the topics of songs they have recently published. The basis for this comparison is an analysis of the original Tunisian Arabic lyrics with special regard to content, language and style.

**Stephan Procházka (University of Vienna):
THE VOICE OF FREEDOM – EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION POP: PROVOCATION OR ENCOURAGEMENT?**

This paper wants to shed light on the lyrics of songs composed during or immediately after the Egyptian Revolution in the spring of 2011. About 25 songs covering different genres from mainstream pop to hip hop and rap will be analysed with regard to their underlying messages. What kind of atmosphere did the composers of these songs create? Are martial revolutionary themes preponderant or does Hani 'Adil and Amir 'Id's song "The Voice of Freedom" (*sot il-hurriya*) typically reflect the spirit of Midan at-Tahrir during the "hot phase" of the revolution? With more than 2 million hits on YouTube this seems to be the most popular of all songs. My hypothesis is that the songs that were sung at Tahrir Square or uploaded during the first weeks of February 2011 do represent the voice of those parts of the opposition that were actively involved in the revolution. Particularly little-known or new singers like Ramy 'Isam created an encouraging atmosphere of non-violence and mutual understanding, above all the bridging of religious and social boundaries. In this regard the phrases and metaphors of Egyptian revolution songs much more resemble the music of the 1968-movement than, for instance, songs from the revolution of 1848. Very striking is the almost complete absence of references to the Islamic religion and to "external enemies" such as Israel or the West. Stars of the Egyptian music scene entered the stage only very late and composed often sentimental and emotional songs glorifying the martyrs of the revolution. A theme common to almost all songs can be interpreted in the light of cultural motion, namely the wish to shape a better society based on freedom (*hurriya*) and dignity (*karama*), which are the two concepts most often mentioned.

**Azza Madian, Nadia Abu Ghazi and Nihal Ragab (Cairo University):
PROTEST CHANTS AND POPULAR MUSIC IN THE ARAB SPRING: THE CASE OF EGYPT**

This paper aims to study the role protest chants played in the Arab Spring, specifically in the case of Egypt. Protest chants created a milieu of communication as well as a soundscape for the masses gathering in the squares in Egypt. The new-found soundscape became an inevitable motive for song-writing both for professionals and amateurs. Protest chants were used in different ways partly genuinely forming the lyrics for some songs, while only standing in the background of other songs to reproduce Lefebvre's spaces of representation (Harvey 2006). While musicians like Ramy 'Isam used chants as their lyrical base, musical

bands such as Eskenderallah depended on chants as a soundscape that can reproduce Tahrir Square in the minds of their audience. A more striking example of how protest chants became the new lyrical milieu for popular songs was the way football fans Ultras groups used their own cheering/protest chants to produce their own popular music. This paper tries to investigate how protest chants became a driving aspect of popularity for popular music in the Arab spring in Egypt. To do so, the paper analyses the use of chants in various ways and by various artists between 25 January 2011 and June 2012. A particular focus will be to understand why chants became important; the bond between chants and the streets in which they were produced; and the role they play in the newly born popular culture of Egyptians. The paper uses an interdisciplinary approach relying on theoretical concepts borrowed from political science, sociology, cultural studies, and human geography.

**Simon Dubois (Université Lumière Lyon II):
STREET SONGS FROM THE SYRIAN PROTEST**

The protest movement in Syria has opened a new space of creativity, enabling the emergence and the extremely fast diffusion of a new form of counterculture. Until now, the latter was limited to a circle of intellectuals, and this, within very specific limits. Therefore, the study of protest songs is one of the means for observing aspects of this changing culture. Because of the extremely prolific production, my corpus is based on only one selection criterion: the demonstration songs, that is to say, the text sung by one or more singers in front of a crowd that interacts with the melody and/or the song (dance, chorus, question and answer game, applause, etc.). In effect, recording at home or in a studio does not provide the same emotional charges and the same political dimension. Moreover, the interaction with the public is an important emotional vector for the mobilization of feelings, energies. This can also provide information about the political and emotional perceptions that tend to be propagated. The study of the lyrics has revealed an evolution of the mentioned themes that can reflect changes in the demonstrator's sensibility. The songs also show the mixture of pre-existent cultural references that can result in the creation of a new artistic identity, freed from censorship. Therefore, we can hear the covers of well-known melodies, traditional songs and rhythms. These different processes observed could be the reconstruction of a common cultural background that will allow originality in the future production.

LINEAR AND NON-LINEAR NARRATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF ARAB REVOLUTIONS

brings together researchers/artists/activists to discuss different narrative forms (music, cinema, video works, novels, blogs, social media, computing), opening the way to debate new media's fluidity in relation to current revolutions.

SPEAKERS

Part I: Friday, 5 October, 3:30-7:15pm, Theatre Monnot (Ashrafieh)

**Matthias Kispert (D-Fuse and University of the Arts, London):
DEBATES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND REVOLUTION**

This presentation is two-fold: Part one is devoted to reflections on the debates about the relations between digital technology/social media and revolutionary movements, while part two is a sound performance called *Discontent*, made from recordings of protests, mainly in London, captured over more than 10 years. Horizontal networks of independently operating nodes, with their links to random access memory and nonlinear narratives, are seen as new models for political activism and revolutionary change, empowering the individual and avoiding the pitfalls of institutionalised power, while still enabling broad movements for social change to come into being. Events like the Arab Spring or the Occupy movement point toward the possibilities of non-hierarchical networks, aided by technology, gathering spontaneously to mount a powerful challenge to the established order. However, after initial enthusiasm by a wide selection of the media, at least those of Europe and the US, many commentators have begun to question whether the role of new technologies has been misrepresented or overestimated. In addition, critics of *Communicative Capitalism*, such as Jodi Dean, assert that in the current abundance of communication individual messages are flattened to mere content, devoid of context and commodified. What emerges from considering the tension between these opposing positions is a more complex narrative, one that is most likely non-linear and definitely open-ended. This paper aims to open up the debate for a critical approach to the theme. Finally, the performance of *Discontent* is a re-interpretation of the audible matter of protests, following multiple routes and overlaps, including 2001 May Day riots, protests on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, the attack on the Royal Bank of Scotland building during the G20 protests in 2009, as well as the first days of the Occupy the London Stock Exchange. The piece aims to make audible the affective links established through sound between people who fight oppression collectively, the empowering and disruptive potential of noise as a cultural form, as well as the mixture of adrenaline rush and fear that is experienced once protest goes beyond peaceful.

**Hassan Choubassi (European Graduate School/Lebanese International University):
THE MASSES: FROM THE IMPLOSION OF FANTASIES TO THE EXPLOSION OF THE
POLITICAL. FROM ACTUAL TO VIRTUAL TO AUGMENTED**

With new technologies of smart phones and mobile tablets, the image has taken a new dimension. It is no longer a representation nor a simulation nor virtual substitution, but rather actual reality itself augmented by the digital parameters of mobile devices, a step further beyond the actual and the virtual into a superimposition of both. Living under severe political oppression, the Arab masses resorted to virtual reality where it is a safe haven to express themselves and their most extreme fantasies without any restriction. Cyber societies sprout in an exponential way caused by biased and cruel regimes of dictatorships that forbids political change and public political expression. Arab political regimes exercised a heavy censorship on conventional media and enforced a single totalitarian political party that does not allow power devolution. With the advent of the Internet Arab masses imploded in the virtual to its extreme saturation until, eventually, they exploded in the actual through revolution.

Monika Halkort (Queen's University Belfast):

COUNTING VERSUS NARRATION. THE DATABASE AS POLITICAL FORM

This presentation discusses the number based ontology of technical media as counter imaginary to conventional historical narratives. Drawing upon recent research on the role of digital technologies and the database in the reconstruction of a Palestinian refugee camp, I will juxtapose the linear trajectory of narrative sequence with the iterative structure of computer algorithms as alternative vector to think transformation and change. The database does not merely represent social worlds but rather diffracts them into itemised lists of data objects that defy any attempt to fix them into finite form. Taking the infinite variability and modulation of the data fragments as my starting point, I want to shift our attention to the critical threshold space between the historical imagination built into narratives of resistance and revolution and the real time logic of informational practices and procedures so as to open up new arenas to think about modalities of resistance and instituting change. It is here in this ephemeral sphere of hidden scripts and algorithms where histories and justice are written and where the source code of revolutions can be traced.

Lev Manovich (University of San Diego):

HOW TO SEE ONE MILLION IMAGES?

The explosive growth of cultural content on the web including social media, and the digitization by museums, libraries, and other agencies opened up fundamentally new possibilities for the studies of both contemporary and historical cultures. But how do we navigate massive visual collections of user-generated content which may contain billions of images? What new theoretical concepts do we need to deal with the new scale of born-digital culture? How do we use data mining to question everything we know about cultures? In 2007 we have established Software Studies Initiative (softwarestudies.com) at the University of California, San Diego, to begin working on these questions. I will show a number of our projects highlighting how visualization allows us to see patterns in cultural data which were not visible before. The examples include analysis of art, photography, film, animation, motion graphics, video games, magazines, and other visual media. The two large scale projects which will be shown are visualization of 1 million pages of manga (Japanese comics) pages and 1 million images from deviantArt (largest social network for non-professional art).

Part 2: Saturday, 6 October, 10:30-2:45pm, Gulbenkian Theatre, Lebanese American University (Hamra)

Marwan M. Kraidy (University of Pennsylvania/AUB):

WALLS OF CONTENTION: VIRALITY, REMIX AND SELF-REFLEXIVITY IN REVOLUTIONARY GRAFFITI IN BEIRUT AND CAIRO

Based on field research in Cairo and on twelve months of urban ethnography in Beirut, including interviews with graffiti artists, which has yielded a photographic archive of more than 300 graffiti, this paper focuses on revolutionary graffiti as a viral and recombinant cultural form that creates what I elsewhere called a vibrant hypermedia space of cultural expression and political contention (see *Reality Television and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). By definition hypermedia space is networked, non-linear and intertextual. Graffiti are a viral form because stencils are uploaded by their creators on Facebook pages, downloaded by activists in other locations, and within hours appear on the walls of multiple cities. For example, graffiti created by Egyptian artists have through Facebook postings, tweets, and in some cases multimedia text messages, been appropriated by Syrian revolutionaries and appear on Beirut walls, with the Lebanese capital becoming a vast repository of Syrian revolutionary and counter-revolutionary graffiti. Importantly, the same stencil is sprayed by various individuals who have no relationship to each other or to the creator of the stencil. Graffiti are a recombinant form because once they are sprayed on walls, they are subverted, modified, and appropriated by various actors who wage representational battles on city walls. In other words, covering, subverting, highlighting and remixing elements of graffiti enact public arguments and dialogues. Graffiti are self-reflexive because they are a prime site for critical commentary about other media—television, Facebook and Twitter, even graffiti themselves. The use of iconographic stencils in graffiti and their spread

throughout urban spaces means that they reach audiences who have limited or no access to social media. By narratively linking various media platforms, graffiti play an important role in constructing hypermedia space. After (1) establishing a theoretical grounding to the notions of virality, remix and self-reflexivity, (2) describing the corpus of graffiti and proposing a taxonomy organizing various graffiti according to criteria of styles and themes, the paper (3) tracks down a handful of graffiti, (3a) mapping their diffusion between social media and city walls (3b), analyzing patterns of remix and aesthetic and political subversion, and (3c) explaining how self-reflexivity articulates virality and remixability.

Lotte Fasshauer (Freie Universität Berlin):

REVEALING BY CONCEALING: LYRICAL NARRATIVES AND PERFORMATIVE IMMEDIACY IN THE VIDEO WORKS OF GHASSAN SALHAB

Narratology offers a wide range of differentiated definitions and descriptive categories. Transmedial narratology looks at the transferability of literature related terminology and concepts. Narratological analysis can also be applied to films: concepts like diegesis, the structuring of time, focalisation or unreliable narration can be investigated in this context. Narratological terminology often reaches its limits in the field of poetry. Conversely, these boundaries expose the characteristics of lyrical films. Feature films that integrate lyrical texts exhibit, albeit temporarily, a different compositional principle. The diegetic world is left behind and temporal and spatial references become blurred. The performative dimension of the spoken and written language is particularly revealed in these moments. The lyrical voice tends to create an impression of an immediate performative presence. This tendency can be specified through a narratological perspective that considers the characteristics of lyrical texts. The focus of this paper is on the relationships between film/video and poetry, especially on ways of portraying time in videos, as well as performative dimensions in video works by Ghassan Salhab, film auteur, video artist and poet. I will also consider how political/historical and theological/philosophical aspects are linked to the lyrical dimensions of the videos. Poetry plays a major role in Ghassan Salhab's films and videos. His aesthetic is based less on continuity and consistency and more on the assembly of disparate elements, influenced as it is by the paradoxical experiences that emerge in periods of disorder provoked by war and subsequent re-orientation. The narratives in Salhab's videos often follow cyclical structures. We can therefore talk of non linear narrativity as an artistic reaction to political upheavals, as well as those in mental and media histories, as a consequence of war. It is especially in periods of political disorder and historical upheavals that existing narratives are called into question; the accepted conceptual structure no longer matches reality and new ways of approaching reality are forged. Poetic modes of expression become more apparent as soon as the conflict reaches a certain level of tension and prosaic solutions no longer seem possible.

Roula Haj-Ismael (Phd Candidate at EGS, amateur teacher and artist):

THE NON-LINEARITY IN TRANSDISCIPLINARITY AND/OR LET'S SWEAT IT OUT INSTEAD

With the demise of the so-called "holy" school textbook and its evaporation from our classrooms, teachers were given the opportunity to construct the beginning, middle and ending of their curriculum, programmes, lessons and teaching engagements. Some welcomed this new freedom and saw it as an opportunity for more authentic teaching and learning. While others retreated into their caves, refusing to participate in the inevitable. The inevitable, is this mind shift, that every educator has to make in order to remain part of the new learning environment, one that goes way beyond the classroom walls and any national, regional, or local space. The underlying model of our teaching and learning within the institution I teach is transdisciplinarity. A new term that is always underlined in red as a misspelling. Transdisciplinarity guides our philosophy of education as well as our beliefs and values. Not Interdisciplinarity, nor multidisciplinary, but TRANSDISCIPLINARITY. Within our classrooms, we strive to offer a multiplicity of knowledge sources. There is neither A NARRATOR, nor is there A NARRATIVE. We follow transdisciplinary themes that are globally relevant and encourage students to be internationally minded. At the same time we have educators who still hold on tightly to what they have become accustomed to. For example, they insist on teaching social studies chronologically, namely we begin at the beginning of history, i.e. prehistory, and teach it at the beginning of school, i.e. preschool. Then every year we move to the next period in history, so that by grade 5, students will

study modern history and the 20th century political systems. This is an example of a strictly linear form of narration, that is being planned for application. Both of the above instances exist within the same educational institution and result in a heightened **tension** between linearity in educational narratives and transdisciplinarity.

And this tension is where our conversation begins, in

trans-
change
between-ness
the im/possibility of action
making tabouli,
in shifting boundaries,
in mediated memories,
in fragmentation
the Tabouli Performer

Amal Khalaf (Center for Possible Studies – Serpentine Gallery London): CIRCLES TO SQUARES: BAHRAIN'S DIGITAL PUBLIC SPHERE

In March 2011 the Bahraini government demolished the Pearl Monument. Bahrain TV relays aerial view images of the former monument lying in pieces on a mound of grass that was the Pearl Roundabout which, for the previous few weeks, protestors had been occupying. The roundabout itself would later be removed and replaced by the Al Farooq junction in an effort to symbolically cleanse the city of the main focal point of the most sustained protests in twenty years. Built in 1982 to commemorate a GCC summit, the huge, milky white monument was clichéd, just another Khaleeji roundabout that featured white sails and a pearl. As regionally clichéd as it seemed, the Lulu or Pearl Roundabout was an icon for Bahrain, appearing on postcards, t-shirts and mugs sold in the suq as well as the 500 fils coin. Lulu roundabout became 'Pearl Square' and the once flat symbol became highly charged. The image of the roundabout has been circulated over and over the Internet by international broadcasting channels, YouTube and state run channels in an argument of representation and re-representation. Whole channels, websites and movements in Bahrain now use its image. So familiar is the jerking, grainy image of the bones of Lulu monument crashing in on itself. The grainy, jerky mobile phone video is no stranger in the Bahraini media-verse. In the strictly controlled media landscape of the Gulf, Khaleejis have long taken the phone video to go to a third space where public space was denied. Here, jokes, secretly filmed girls dancing and boys skating with their slippers out of moving car doors. Where, as Baudrillard would say "the public stage, the public place have been replaced by a gigantic circulation, ventilation, and ephemeral connecting space." Now the images of the private universes of individuals and families have been replaced and instead an argument of representation has ensued. This paper traces representations, appropriations and symbolism of the Lulu roundabout while touching on issues of public space both real and virtual, through found online footage, images and artists work. The creative/destructive inanimate mobile phone video technologies that have transported the Gulf out of this world and onto the next, have now brought Lulu's inanimate, empty symbol to its second life.

Sahar Mandour (Assafir Newspaper):

قصة الأمس

في الخامس والعشرين من كانون الثاني العام ٢٠١١، تغيّرت قصة مصر.

لكن الصحف الصادرة في الخامس والعشرين المذكور، كانت تروي قصة الأمس.

فكيف كانت حياة مصر تجري في ذلك الأمس، عندما كانت القصة القديمة تتجه بلا تردّد إلى تنماتها، بثبات لم يراودها شكّ للحظة بأنه قابل للاهتزاز؟ أي عالم رسمت معالمه، بينما العالم الذي يعرفه المصريون يتجه إلى زواله؟ بأيّ عناوين احتفت، عند أي أحداث توقفت؟ كأنها الصفحة الأخيرة من رواية لا تعرف إنها ستنتهي اليوم.

الصحف، القومية كما المعارضة، المصرية كما العربية والدولية، هي تلك الصفحة الأخيرة.

سأعود إلى قراءتها، لأعيد تركيب مشهد النهار الأخير. من العهد السابق الثورة، مثلما حفظه الأرشيف اليومي، بأخباره السياسية والأمنية والاقتصادية والثقافية والفنية والمتفرقة، مصرياً وعربياً وعالمياً.

ثم سأعود كتابتها بلغة روائية، كقصة قصيرة تبدأ كما الأيام العادية، وتنتهي كما الأيام العادية، غافلة عن سياقي آخر يسكنها ويترى بها.

هو مشهد الفصل الأخير.. ولم يكن يعرف كتابها حينها أنه الأخير.

OPEN REBELLION; HIDDEN SCRIPTS

aims to provide a forum and initiate a dialogue in which participating activists and academic observers can discuss and debate aspects pertaining to the inception, execution and effect of the 'Arab Spring'. The panel will discuss what kind of ideas, expectations and opportunities are conceived as decisive for bringing about regime change, and how these factors as well as the sustainability and prospects of change are judged after more than a year and a half since the uprisings started to take shape.

SPEAKERS

Part I: Sunday, 7 October, 12-3pm, Beirut Art Center (Jisr el-Wati)

Siniša Šikman (OTPOR! and Canvas, Serbia):

1) NONVIOLENT MOVEMENTS ARE DICTATORS' WORST NIGHTMARES

Social-economic issues are behind Occupy Wall Street, French, Greek and Spanish riots, the Arab protests wave and many other protests in the last few years around the globe. In the wake of what is known as "Arab Spring", a wave of protests washed away the regimes of Tunisia and Egypt. Inspired by these events, demonstrators across the region stood up against and seriously challenged the strongmen of Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Syria. The question is what the common denominator of the "Arab spring" was. The answer is People Power, the power of non-partisan youth movements. A united movement, committed to nonviolence, with a thorough plan to achieve its goals is capable of momentous achievements. Such a strategic movement is the worst nightmare for every autocrat and can pull the pillars of support out of the government support and force the strongmen to make concessions once considered impossible. The results have been inconceivable; once ruthless rulers, the leaders of numerous Arab countries have been promising reforms, reshuffling governments, and entering into dialogues with opposition groups they once banned. Maybe the "Arab spring" actually began in Lebanon with the "Cedar revolution" after Hariri's assassination, but unfortunately it finished the moment violence prevailed and became the leading force in the entire region. Unfortunately guns must be sold and used and everything that happened in Libya and that is happening in Syria cannot be called "Arab spring". A better name would be "Arab tragedy". Without labour unions in Tunisia and youth movements in Egypt changes would have been much slower and like in Libya and Syria would rely on armed groups. Therefore achievements of those people involved in changes in Tunisia and Egypt are even bigger.

2) BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY STRUCTURES

The "Arab spring" certainly introduced a new way of thinking and confirmed that nonviolent changes are possible, more sustainable and even faster than violent changes. Common wisdom has it that whoever controls the military, the police, and the media ("pillars of support") is the one who holds power. On the surface, that may appear to be true. However, Gandhi's efforts to end British rule in India, the drive to defeat Pinochet at the polls in Chile, the US Civil Rights Movement under Martin Luther King Jr., Lech Walesa's leadership of the Solidarity labour movement in Poland, the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, and recently the events in the Middle East prove that governments, no matter how brutal, ultimately rely on the consent of the people. For decades the misconceptions about the situation in North Africa and the Middle East were widely engraved in people's minds. The international community saw the region as incapable of change, let alone a transition to democracy. The two possible scenarios were either an Egyptian/Tunisian military supported secular dictatorship, or a Teheran dictatorial, corrupted, more or less military run theocracy. Initial expectations of the people on the ground still have not been reached and it is a long trip that will be much shorter if people stay together and continue with the same energy and remove all obstacles. In order to provide unity of the people and therefore faster changes, the most important movements and people in revolutions should remain active.

There are also many people, organizations, and international factors that would like to see the whole Arab world involved in violence or would like to establish new dictatorship. In order to prevent this, all revolutionaries should be awake and should build civil society structures as strong and fast as possible.

**Ahmed Maher (April 6 Movement, Egypt):
AFTER THE REVOLUTION IN EGYPT**

Arab Spring revolutions began in 2011 after a huge effort from freedom and democracy defenders in each country, following years under oppression and tyranny, poverty and hunger. Arab revolutions are neither a coincidence, nor a Facebook revolution as the Western media likes to call it, nor a conspiracy to reshape the Middle East. They are a continuation of previous experiences of previous generations in search of freedom, democracy and good governance. We are a generation who found itself under despotic oppressive regimes wasting the country's wealth and suppress anyone who criticized or demanded reform and good governance. We decided to resist tyranny whatever its costs, and that we were the change that we wanted. We started despite tyranny and oppression in defiance of power, and we used all peaceful means and know how to use the Internet as a means of communication and a means to get away from censorship and a means to hold meetings without attracting the security services and as a means to reach the largest number of youth and our dream for real change. We also insisted to reach out to the majority of Egyptians, who live in poor areas and have no Internet, those who feel the real suffering of the corrupt regime and those who need change, and they moved on January 25. We spent a difficult period since the departure of Mubarak 11 February 2011, because the revolutionaries did not have a unified leadership and did not take power; instead, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) did. After several months we discovered that the military council was part of the Mubarak regime and part of the same corrupted network, the network that ruled Egypt for all these years. So we returned to rise up again, but in more difficult conditions. The military had learned the game, and did not repeat the same mistakes. They used innovative ways to disperse and divide us, and spread rumours against April 6 Movement to crush our credibility. They used the media to spread rumours and discredit the rebels in the Egyptian street. They used the old rumours used before by the Mubarak regime: April 6 Movement is a network of spies, takes money from abroad to destroy Egypt, and gets training in Serbia to destroy Egypt... They also used the Internet against us, and all the ways in which we were proficient. We were then put in the difficult position to choose a presidential candidate from one related to the old system and another candidate from the Muslim Brotherhood. Some decided to boycott the elections, but we as April 6 Movement decided to support President Morsy, despite all our differences with him. If Shafiq had won the elections then the old regime would have come back. Despite all that has happened since 25 January we are optimistic, and convinced that we are on track.

**Ala'a Shehabi (Economics lecturer and co-founder of Bahrain Watch, Bahrain):
CONFIGURING DISSENT; YOUTH RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN BAHRAIN IN THE WAKE OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS**

Away from romantic descriptions of the so-called Arab Spring protests in Bahrain, this paper seeks to explain the hows and whys of the popular social movement that spread across the country beginning February 14. Demonstrators initially converged on the Pearl Roundabout, which was subsequently cleared through the collaboration between the nations of the Arabian Peninsula under the auspices of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to stop the spread of these revolutionary protests. In the aftermath of the initial explosion of protests that are still ongoing, this presentation will elaborate on the modes of mobilization, reliance on pre-existing networks and organizations, and how demonstrators perceive or evaluate their opportunities when confronted with government repression. The consequences of state tactics aimed at quelling the protests was a fundamental turning point that reconfigured and reconstructed the grassroots movement and led to the establishment of the anonymous February 14 Youth Coalition (F14YC) that is currently leading the street protest movement. This movement's moral and organizational capital was initially established in the occupied Pearl Roundabout during the space of one month in February and March 2011 which was a practical location for organizing protests and disseminating information thus setting the foundation for the organizational base of a

new movement. It also became an effective, if not iconic site for protesters, of all ages, that imbued their struggle with meaning and legitimacy particularly when it was later intentionally destroyed by the state. It continues to be the focal point of the movement, as it became a utopian memory in the collective consciousness. The moral resources built in the movement are what sustain its revolutionary appeal. Away from the common media narratives that have constructed the political struggle in Bahrain as a sectarian one, I hope to project the multidimensional ways that the 'youth' reinforce, resist and negotiate power relations in Bahrain. Particularly worth exploring further are the youth responses to different forms of authority such as external power (Western governments), pre-existing political groupings, religious authority and gender relations, as well as the Bahraini regime since February 14.

**Reinoud Leenders (University of Amsterdam/King's College London):
THE ONSET OF SYRIA'S POPULAR UPRISING: OPPORTUNITY, NETWORKS, AND FRAMING**

This paper explores the onset of the uprising in Syria, from mid-March 2011 until the summer of that year. It explores the opportunity created by the Arab uprisings to shed light on the patterns of unprecedented popular mobilization and collective action in Syria. Specifically, it presents an analysis that critically and loosely borrows from, communicates with, and hopes to make a modest contribution to social movement theory (SMT). While threat and opportunity are necessary elements for popular mobilization, they are not sufficient. Both 'threat' and 'opportunity' therefore need to be contextualized within the specific social and political environment, real or perceived, of the 'early risers' in Syria (especially Dar'a) in order to appreciate their local significance. We further argue that protestors, when under threat and faced with the opportunity, collectively rose up by capitalizing on their dense social networks. Strong clan-based or tribal social structures, circular labour migration, cross-border linkages, and proliferating practices denoted as 'criminal' variably played a key role in cementing these social networks. We further contend that these networks' ability to easily dissolve into one another due to their high degree of interconnectedness was instrumental in 'leaderless' but effective collective mobilization and its ability to pose a strong and enduring challenge to the regime. Additional attention will be given to protestors' abilities to overcome obstacles related to their initially limited 'repertoire of contention' and resultant discursive strategies ('framing'), which proved key to protest diffusion nationwide. Our main argument will be assessed for its use of social media sources and compared with alternative analyses emphasizing socio-economic deprivation in the onset of Syria's uprising in its peripheries.

Part 2: Monday, 6 October, 2-5pm, Orient-Institut Beirut (Zokak el-Blat)

**Abdulnabi Alekry (Bahrain Transparency Society, Bahrain):
BAHRAIN: THE AFTERMATH OF 14 FEB. UPRISING**

"When the sky is your ceiling, the ground is your bed and everyone around you is a friend, then your are at The Pearl Roundabout" Bahraini Protester

Bahrain witnessed an uprising on 14th February 2011, the third country in a series of Arab uprisings following Tunisia and Egypt in what came to be known as Arab Spring. As in the case of Egypt, the uprising was called for through a plea on Facebook two weeks before the event. The plea promoted two slogans: one, that the protests should be of a peaceful nature, and two, that the aim was to reform the regime. It has been a year and a half since the uprising started. It is still going on, despite the sweeping unprecedented crackdown by the Bahraini state against the uprising, with the support of Saudi forces, and the GCC campaign to contain it. The 14th February 2011 movement is unprecedented in the contemporary history of Bahrain. It radically changed entrenched concepts and practices among the people and their various forms of associations and means of expressions. What is more, the ruling authority was forced to reveal its true nature, despite the cosmetic so called democratic system, and its dependency on outside forces. The paper examines five points relevant to the effects, sustainability and the prospects of 14th February.

- It considers itself part of the Arab Spring with lasting effects, regardless of successes or failures to date
- The people's collective solidarity and determination signals substantive change

- The well-established structures attempting to co-opt people is limited and ultimately a failure
 - Progress to date is below expectations, but has not deterred from continuation
 - Ideology and elites are not the means for change; rather it is a mass movement
- In view of a year and a half of Arab Spring, it is time to draw lessons but not absolute doctrines.

Faraj Najem (Libya specialist, Libya and UK):

THE STATE OF THE MEDIA JUST BEFORE AND DURING THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION; IMPACT, VIOLATION AND CHALLENGES

Media during the Qaddafi era was a family means of controlling and directing the masses. There were four TV stations and a similar number of newspapers which were owned and controlled by the “great” leader’s children and favoured kinsmen. Libyans who fled persecution found in the diaspora a breathing space to set up less glamorous media posts in Arabic and English, such as websites/radio in London and the USA, that proved to be more effective and impact making than those of the regime with budgets and corruption in millions. Qaddafi and his lynch men especially the head of the security services, Mousa Kousa, saw that a looming danger had to be stopped by any means including jamming centres and hiring foreign technical expertise from east and west to do that. When the revolution broke out on the evening of the 15th of February 2011 in Benghazi, the regime reverted quickly to old habits by liquidating and arresting activists all over Libya. At the same time, they carried on monopolizing his media mouthpieces and advocating violence against the revolutionaries, depriving them of any voice. This necessitated alternatives and ultimately led to an explosion in the number of media outlets in the hands of the revolutionaries culminating in more than 170 newspapers and 20 TV satellites stations. Now the revolution triumphed in Libya with almost 50 thousand casualties. However, there remains a threat that Qaddafi’s immediate family and cronies around the region are bent on sabotaging the success the Libyans have made in the last year post liberation. The future will be determined by the influence exerted by media, as we have seen in the case of Libya where Qaddafi was defeated primarily by Libyans on the ground and NATO jets and Aljazeera and its likes in the skies. Also, the local media post revolution impacted on ordinary Libyans and made them cast their vote against the Islamist parties in an unprecedented move that shocked the Muslim Brotherhood and surprised the rest of the world.

Yezid Sayigh (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Beirut):

WHOSE ARMY IS IT ANYWAY?

“Whose army is it anyway?” looks at how different social groups and political actors lay claim to the national army as “theirs”, and how the army sees and portrays itself to the public. “The army and the people are one hand”, an image portrayed in Egypt for instance, is one example of how the army likes to portray its place in society. In Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, on the other hand, the “belonging” of the army reflects social cleavages as different communities variously claim it for themselves or regard it as biased to rival communities. In the Gulf petro-monarchies, conversely, reliance on non-national military personnel presents yet another permutation of who or what the army represents to its own society and of its function within the state. The aim of this contribution is to reflect the politics behind these images and portrayals.

HUMOUR, SUFFERING AND RESISTANCE

aims to discuss and illustrate the various roles of humour in coping with political, social, and cultural oppression in the Arab world. In view of the complexity and dramatic nature of the topic, the panel brings together academic specialists in political humour research as well as practitioners who are using humour on a professional or semi-professional basis.

SPEAKERS

Part I: Sunday, 7 October, 4:15-7:30pm, Beirut Art Center (Jisr el-Wati)

“Alaa Awad explains to Mona Abaza his Art”, a film by Rudolf Thome presented by Mona Abaza

Alaa Awad (Faculty of Fine Arts, Luxor):

MUHAMMED MAHMUD STREET. EGYPTIAN HERITAGE AND POPULAR SAGA

Graffiti is an art of rejection that reaches its audience through the street. It is an expression of social and political conditions, addressing issues concerning society. There have been some attempts to express the Egyptian revolution and the rejection of the colonial mandate over the people. Such attempts were linked to Egyptian heritage as an important part of the culture of society. Means of expressing popular resistance and suffering have varied, and included humour and irony as a natural result of oppression practiced by the regimes against the people. The downtown area of Cairo was one of the most important areas which witnessed the events of the Egyptian revolution, including demonstrations and sit-ins against violence. Muhammed Mahmud Street is one of the most important streets where revolutionaries recorded their views and rebellion on the walls, turning the street into the biggest witness to recent events. It is impossible to understand ourselves and appreciate our capabilities unless our past is fully grasped as it contributed to creating us. Our understanding of the past is only an understanding of ourselves. The historical consciousness complements the national culture. It highlights the national character and creates integration between the past, the present and the future.

Mohamed Anwar and Hicham Rahma (Tok Tok Magazine, Cairo):

“DO YOU LIKE WHAT IS HAPPENING?! THE COUNTRY IS FALLING DOWN!”

“Do you like what is happening?! The country is falling down!” this is the most famous sentence you may hear while taking a taxi ride through streets of Cairo. Does this sentence really reflect a new feeling of boredom towards the revolution? Or there is a lack of communication with the revolutionary groups, activists and parties? The Egyptian revolution was famous for its extremely satirical slogans and chants, and before 25 January 2011, satirical journalism played an important role in destroying the “prestige” of the past regime. But how will humour play its role in the new political system with political Islam groups taking large portions of power and the military generals struggling for the benefits they used to gain from the past regime? At this point the Egyptian youth depends on humour as a weapon to face those in power on the one hand, and on the other hand as a new way of communication to deliver their messages to the people who are being misled by the deceptive governmental media tools. But will they be able to develop a common language with the ordinary people? Through this new social and political scene, “Tok Tok” magazine came out as the first Egyptian comics magazine targeting adults and discussing social and political topics in an Egyptian way. Although “comic strips” art is still new to the Egyptian society, the magazine has been well received to date.

Nader Srage (Lebanese University):

“DÉGAGE” – OUT – «ارحل» – A PASSWORD THAT TRANSCENDS ARAB COUNTRIES

“Dégage” – Out – «ارحل» was one of the most widespread slogans by the youth of the Arab Spring (2011-2012) revolting against their Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan or Syrian

tyrannies. This clause-equivalent or saying, comprised of a single word, plays the role of a sentence in terms of function, as it delivers a direct and transparent message. It in effect reflects an imperative verb, demanding the immediate fall of tyrants. The French version of this clause-equivalent, “*Dégage*”, saw the day at the end of 2010 in Tunis. Its Arabic equivalent, «*ارحل*», subsequently spread in Tunis, then in Cairo at Tahrir Square by January 2011. My paper aims to study the style or sarcastic tone adopted by young Egyptians claiming Mubarak, even Ben Ali and Khaddafi **Out**. The clause-equivalent «*ارحل*», repeated orally or written on numerous signs and billboards has given way to around 20 dialectal variants in Egypt. It has thus translated the sarcastic popular temperament in addition to the renowned Egyptian sense of humour.

Part 2: Monday, 6 October, 10-1pm, Orient-Institut Beirut (Zokak el-Blat)

Mona Abaza (American University in Cairo): CAIRO'S MURALS AND GRAFFITI: MEMORIAL SPACES OR SARDONIC RESISTANCE?

Since the January revolution the city of Cairo witnessed a fantastic boom in graffiti and murals. In this paper, I argue that graffiti is turning out to be the barometer of the revolution whereby these are fantastic means of narrating the chronology and events of the revolution. Humour and insolence are two main elements that make the messages of these graffiti extremely sharp and effective. Besides its sardonic aspect, the murals are turning out to be memorial spaces to commemorate the martyrs of the revolution. Muhammed Mahmud Street, also known as *shar'a 'ayoun al-hurriya* (the street of the eyes of freedom), is becoming an iconic space. The street has been recently discovered by numerous photographers and passers-by, not only for its mesmerizing graffiti but also for the curiosity it has raised; for the remembrance of the martyrs who were killed there; for the journalists who still want to investigate the violent events that took place around that area during the course of the past year, and follow-up on how the quarter is coping with the barricades and walls erected by security forces; for its dwellers who suffered not only from skirmished but also the use of lethal- and teargas by anti-riot police during successive clashes; for its popular cafes juxtaposing the murals; and, last but not least, for those who still remain nostalgic about popular life around the old campus of the American University in Cairo (AUC). Muhammed Mahmud is one of the main streets leading to Tahrir Square. This street will remain a memorable space for the revolution because it witnessed some of the most dramatic and violent moments this past November, December, and February, including the gassing, killing and disfiguration of hundreds of protesters by Egyptian police forces. During these events, police gunmen and trained snipers had reportedly targeted (and in some case eliminated) the eyes of protesters. In the aftermath of clashes between protesters and security forces that took place between 19 and 24 November 2011, Muhammed Mahmud Street witnessed the erection of a cement block-stones-wall that cuts it in the middle and separates it into two different areas. It also witnessed the destruction of this same wall in February 2012 by the revolutionaries and residents who at the time were engaged in similar confrontations with security forces. It later witnessed the construction of more walls and barriers that blocked various side streets leading to the main parallel Sheikh Rehan Street, the location of the monumental Ministry of Interior, currently protected by tanks and wired checkpoints. Of greater importance, during the entire year of 2011, the wall of the old campus of AUC witnessed fantastic mutations and transformations on weekly bases, epitomized in a constant war that entailed the painting of walls. Specifically, it was (and continues to be) a war between a set of highly creative graffiti painters and the military junta's security personnel who insisted hopelessly on repainting the walls in white to erase the mocking slogans, the daring insults against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and the hilarious drawings. Apart from mockery and sardonic irony, the theme of commemorating the martyrs is what is most moving about these murals.

Sara Binay (University of Halle): JOKES – INDICATORS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

The role of political jokes is a theme well discussed in journals and other media time by time. A very popular opinion is that joking is a subversive act challenging the ruler resp. the ruling class of the country. Also, the strong persecution of jokes tellers in Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, Ceausescu's Rumania or under different rulers in the Arab World, e.g.

president Nasser in Egypt, seems to prove that theory. The Sociologist Christie Davies (2011) and others (Badarneh 2011) have shown that political jokes mirror and illustrate political changes but they have no moving power (motion). They represent a genre of (spoken) texts among others only. Jokes indicate changes in a society and may even predict the fields of a coming change. The paper tries to analyze some post-revolutionary jokes from Arab countries and elsewhere and to propose some theses about the function and contents of jokes.

Khaled El Ekhatyar (Syrian Blogger and Activist): ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A HOMSI... THE SEVENTEEN REVOLUTIONARY MUSCLES IN THE SYRIAN INTIFADA

Homs is no longer as it was before 2011. Today, it is the capital of the revolution, as the remains of its population describes it. The same city also used to be known as “the capital of jokes” in Syria. But despite the fact that the revolution is not a joke there, the revolution did not stop the flood of humour and irony that is still coming out of the bloody events of daily life in Homs. Through laughter we began to discover the good sense of humour in unknown geographical areas in Syria, from the Amouda in the far north to Hrak and Enkhel in Houran-Daraa, through the most beautiful discovery perhaps so far Kafer Nebbol. On the beat of popular tunes, rap and hip hop songs, folk dances, comments and “Likes” on Facebook pages dedicated to “tanks spraying soapy water and oil”, Syrian citizens continue to express their resistance to the brutal oppression machine of the regime in many creative ways. Syrian regime officials can be professional guards in their full prisons, sharp snipers with advanced automatic rifles, good tank drivers like Schumacher in Formula 1; but they are absolutely incapable of writing an inspiring poem, or playing Jazz saxophone, and definitely far away from creating a good day-starting joke, or even to understand one when it's there. Regime officials made at least two mistakes in the last year and a half. First, they called this revolution a “joke”. But at the same time, they underestimated the ability of humour itself to shake the throne of tyranny. Thinking that what keeps the Syrian people alive and kicking under the bombardment and siege is only the medical relief, food convoys, and more recently arms shipments, unaware of the self power inherent in the lives of these people who are energizing their willing to continue fighting for their freedom through laughs, always, even by making fun of their own pain.

Lisa Weeden (University of Chicago): HUMOUR IN DARK TIMES

Focusing on how laughter works in the era of Bashar al-Asad, this paper begins by investigating Allayth Hajju's work, the way in which comedies such as the award-winning *Day`a Daay`a (A Forgotten Village)* register both the grim realities of the 2000s and its apparent seductions. At times uncannily prescient, at times poignantly bleak, Hajju's comedy opens up alternatives to its own most conservative impulses, thereby demonstrating the potency and unevenness of ideological saturation. Parodying the regime, citizens, and the mechanisms of social control that enmesh both, *A Forgotten Village* is Syrian drama's most successful exercise in poking fun at authoritarian circumstances. If the edgiest television series placed responsibility for current problems—of corruption, fear, surveillance, corporeal abuse, and rhetorical excess—onto both rulers and ruled, it is left to the dark humour of the uncensored internet (fueled by members of a growing opposition) to broadcast parodies of regime discourses in ways that offer up a more overtly trenchant critique of the regime and rescue or romanticize (depending on one's view) the people. The presentation thus concludes by discussing humour in the context of ongoing tumult in the present. It investigates clever remixes of the president's speeches and fast-paced parodies of regime thugs' machismo, demonstrating the presence of cultural creativity unbounded from the regime's censors. Some of these parodies are explicitly beholden to Mr. Hajju's previous work. Few have the layers or chart the ambivalences and cynicism that make Hajju's work so intriguingly problematic. The bold ephemera currently on offer testify to the world-affirming capacities of ordinary people to make something new, even at tremendous bodily risk. They are a call to and an instance of solidarity - arguably a simultaneous escape from, acknowledgment and defiance of suffering. In short, I want to argue that comedy and the laughter it provokes do important ideological work, sometimes shoring up political conventions and sometimes offering important challenges to them. In

its wryest moments, comedy beckons us towards what Theodor Adorno calls the “it could have been otherwise” of commitment—the theories and creative genres that have the capacity to perform the coming-into-being of political activity (if not necessarily a novel political program) in the present [Adorno is cited in Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011, p. 13). And my argument and wording here is beholden to Berlant’s. See Theodor Adorno, “Commitment.” Translated by Francis McDonagh. *New Left Review* I (1974), pp. 87-88.].

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES (in order of appearance)

SOUND MESSAGES

Yves Gonzalez-Quijano

Senior Lecturer at Lumière Lyon II University, Yves Gonzalez-Quijano has lived in Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. Translator of more than fifteen modern Arabic novels into French, his research focuses on the politics of culture in the Arab world. Blogging at “culture et politique arabes” (<http://cpa.hypotheses.org>), he has recently published *Arabités numériques. Le printemps du web arabe* (Sindbad/Actes Sud, 2012).

Mark LeVine

Mark LeVine is Professor of history at UC Irvine, Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University, senior columnist at al-Jazeera, and international world musician. His most recent books are *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel*, with Gershon Shafir and the forthcoming *The Five Year Old Who Toppled a Pharaoh*. His most recent album is *Flowers in the Desert* (EMI).

Jackson Allers

Jackson Allers is a writer, music journalist, filmmaker and editor who has spent the last 6-years documenting the alternative and independent musical trends in the Arab world for outlets like The National, Rolling Stone ME, National Public Radio, Red Bull Music Academy Magazine and primarily on his blog Beats and Breath. His work on Arab hip hop in the region has been cited frequently as a reference point in numerous academic settings. His 29-min radio documentary – Rhyme and Revolution – about the Arab hip-hop movement and the revolutions has travelled to three continents and aired on over 200 radio stations worldwide, and his short documentary about the young Palestinian hip hop group I-Voice (Bourj al Barajneh refugee camp) and their search for a back-up generator for their camp studio has been cited by critics as a “non-polemic” look at the legacy of the Palestinian conflict. He is writing a book on the rise of Arab hip hop in the region and Diaspora, and is also helping to document the making of the Arab hip hop compilation “Khat Thaleth” - produced by the Stronghold Sound record label.

Nicolas Puig

Nicolas Puig is anthropologist at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (France). He works in the field of anthropology of music. He had done fieldwork in Egypt (popular music and urban society) and is now visiting researcher at CEMAM (University St Joseph) in Beirut.

Ines Dallaji

Ines Dallaji is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of *Oriental Studies* of the *University of Vienna, Austria*. Her research interests are Arabic dialects (especially Tunisian Arabic) and popular Arabic culture, and her Ph.D. focuses on rap music and its influence on the revolution in Tunisia. Currently she is also working as a doctoral researcher for a project called “Sharing Ancient Wisdoms” in the framework of the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) and teaching Tunisian Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic at the department mentioned above.

Stephan Procházka

Stephan Procházka is Professor of Arabic Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Vienna, Austria. His main areas of research are Arabic dialectology and

popular religion and culture of the Middle East and North Africa. He is the head of several research projects and has published widely on numerous topics related to contemporary spoken Arabic and aspects of everyday culture. <http://homepage.univie.ac.at/stephan.prochazka/>

Azza Madian

Azza Madian is faculty member of the Department of Musicology, Cairo Conservatoire, Academy of Arts in Cairo. Between 1995 and 2009, she has been a member of the Music, Opera and Ballet committee of the Supreme Council for Culture in Egypt, and worked in different positions at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina between 2003 and 2011. Azza received her PhD in Musicology from the Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), her MA in Historical Musicology from Columbia University (New York City), and her BA in Philosophy from Cairo University.

Nadia Badr El-Deen Abou Ghazi, PhD

Nadia Badr El-Deen Abou Ghazi works as an associate professor at the Political Science Department at Cairo University. She is specialized in Comparative Politics; her minor specialty is in Political Sociology. Her Master's thesis subject is "Cases of Liberation in Contemporary Egyptian Theatre from 1952 until 1967". Her Doctoral thesis subject is "The State and Culture in Egypt: Studying the Cultural Policy and its Reflections on the Intellectual Environment in Egypt (1970-1981)". Fields of interest: Cultural Studies, Political Sociology, Public Opinion and Communication studies, Political Sociology analysis of art and creative productions.

Nihal Ragab

Nihal Ragab is working as a teaching assistant at the Political Science Department at Cairo University. She received her BA in political science from Cairo University, and Master's degree in Human Ecology: Culture, Power and Sustainability, from Lund University. Nihal's MA thesis "Friction: The interplay of a Bedouin community, the Egyptian Government, local and global NGOs, South Sinai (August – December 2010)" has been written based on a five-month fieldwork in Nuweiba, South Sinai. Nihal is interested in approaching and studying artistic products and phenomenon, specially taking place in an urban context. Her current research interests involve exclusion and inclusion in public spaces in Cairo through art and; literature and post-colonial theory.

Simon Dubois

Simon is pursuing his Master degree in Arabic studies at the Université Lumière Lyon II. He is currently writing his dissertation on protest songs in Syria, under the direction of Professor Henri-Hassan Sahloul.

LINEAR AND NON-LINEAR NARRATIVES

Matthias Kispert

Matthias Kispert is an electronic music composer and artist living in London. His broad range of interests includes audiovisual live performance, composition with found sound, improvisation, documentary as artistic medium, as well as the relations between artistic practice and wider cultural and social issues. As audio director of media artist collective D-Fuse, he is responsible for the sound aspect and also the conceptual development of much of the group's work, including videos, installations and live cinema performances. He also regularly collaborates with other digital artists and designers including United Visual Artists, Quayola and Jason Bruges Studio. His work and collaborations are shown at exhibitions and festivals globally, including USC, LA MOCA, TriBeCa Film Festival and Eyebeam (USA), Itaú Cultural, FILE, Multiplicidade and Hipersonica (Brasil), Royal Festival Hall, onedotzero, ISEA, CineCity, Lovebytes, AV Festival and London Film Festival (UK), Hong Kong Arts Centre, I/O Gallery and Get It Louder (China), GaîtéLyrique and Nuit Blanche (France), EMAF (Germany), Moscow Architectural Biennial (Russia), MU, STRP,

Sonic Acts, Today's Art and Imageradio (Netherlands), NúmeroProjecta (Portugal), NABA Milan (Italy), MOD Festival (Mexico), Dis-Locate (Japan), REC Madrid and LEV (Spain), MIC ToiRerehiko (New Zealand) and others. Matthias Kispert is a lecturer in Sound Art at the University of the Arts London.

Hassan Choubassi

Hassan Choubassi is a visual artist and researcher born in Beirut in 1970 who graduated from DasArts in Amsterdam in 2005, and from the Lebanese American University in Beirut 1996. He is pursuing a PhD in Communication Media at the European Graduate School and researching the Arab online media accountability and how "augmented reality" of new media technology is mobilized to negate a stagnated media that is abolishing political change. Choubassi is currently the coordinator of the Communication Arts department at the Lebanese International University (LIU). His works were exhibited in Lebanon, Egypt, Germany, the Netherlands, UK, Belgium, Spain, USA, Luxembourg, Denmark, and others.

Monika Halkort

Author, writer, researcher on old/new media and political technologies. Monika is currently completing her PhD as part of the ESRC funded "Conflict in Cities" programme at the Universities of Exeter, Cambridge and Queens/Belfast. Her work traverses the fields of urbanism, political geography, cybernetics and media archaeology. The relationship between technology, the production of knowledge and political subjectivities is of particular interest. Her PhD focuses on political technologies which are discussed in the context of the reconstruction of a Palestinian Refugee camp in North Lebanon. Particular emphasis is put on the role of geographic information systems (GIS), the database and digital mapping tools in facilitating processes of political claim making under conditions where questions of ownership, rights and belonging remain unclear. Prior to her career as academic researcher, Monika has worked as a broadcast journalist for various public and private radio and TV networks in Austria and Germany. She has built up extensive knowledge on the Middle East during her 15 year long career as documentary producer and feature editor covering social, political and cultural affairs in Lebanon, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Iran. Next to her journalistic productions, Monika also produced interactive media environments and lectured at various German universities on interactive, database driven narratives. Her theoretical work on new media focused on questions relating to the social, political and cultural impact of Internet and mobile communication technologies in a globalised world.

Lev Manovich

Lev Manovich's books include *Software Takes Command* (released under CC license, 2008), *Soft Cinema: Navigating the Database* (MIT Press, 2005), and *The Language of New Media* (MIT Press, 2001), which is hailed as "the most suggestive and broad ranging media history since Marshall McLuhan". He has written 90+ articles which have been reprinted over 300 times in 30+ countries. Manovich is Professor in the Visual Arts Department, University of California – San Diego, a Director of the Software Studies Initiative at California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2), and a Visiting Research Professor at Goldsmiths College (University of London), De Montford University (UK) and College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales (Australia). He is much in demand to lecture around the world, having delivered 300+ lectures, seminars and workshops during the last 10 years.

Marwan M. Kraidy

Marwan M. Kraidy is Professor of Global Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and the Edward Said Chair of American Studies at the American University of Beirut. Currently a Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and previously of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, his books include *Reality Television and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life* (Cambridge, 2010), which won the 2010 Best

Book Award in Global Communication and Social Change from the International Communication Association, the 2011 Diamond Anniversary Best Book Award from the National Communication Association, and the 2011 Roderick P. Hart Outstanding Book Award from the Political Communication Division of the National Communication Association; *Arab Television Industries* (BFI/Palgrave, 2009, with J. Khalil), *Hybridity, or, The Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Temple, 2005), and the co-edited volumes *Global Media Studies: Ethnographic Perspectives* (Routledge, 2003), and *The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives* (Routledge, 2010).

Lotte Fasshauer

After obtaining her Master's degree at the Freie Universität Berlin, Lotte Fasshauer worked at the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin, including on the *Taswir – Pictorial Mappings of Islam and Modernity* exhibition. She was a doctoral scholarship holder at the Orient Institut Beirut in 2010 before working on a freelance basis at the ha'atelier – platform for philosophy and art in 2011. She has been a PhD student at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School since October 2011. Her Ph.D. examines the lyrical dimension in the work of the Lebanese film auteur Ghassan Salhab in the context of contemporary artistic practice in Lebanon.

Roula Haj-Ismaïl

Roula Haj-Ismaïl is my name. Fragmenting Folktales is my game. I was born out of a strange union between 1/3 Circasian, 1/3 Palestinian, 1/3 Syrian and a 3/3 Lebanese, and bred in the land Down Under. My fate was/is fragmentation at its best and worst. Part-time teacher, part-time DJ, part-time Aussie, part-time freedom fighter, part-time artist, part-time mother. The best of all worlds and at the same time nowhere at all. This fragmentation, is the 'meat' of my work. It is the playful fascination of the continuous dissolution of one part of my body and the resurrection of another part. The Tabouli Performer is a celebration of this bodily fragmentation. If you would like to know more biographical information, then you are welcome to dialogue with Roula in person or online at tabouliperformer@gmail.com or tabouliperformer.blogspot.com.

Amal Khalaf

Amal Khalaf is a curator and researcher, and currently the Assistant Curator of Projects at the Serpentine Gallery. With an MA in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths, her research addresses themes of urbanism, community, media activism and art through participatory projects and media initiatives. She has worked in independent film and broadcast media in the Middle East and has exhibited work with Moving Walls, Open Society Institute and Al Riwaq Gallery, Bahrain. This year, she spoke on a panel at "Media, Power & Revolution: Making the 21st Century, London in April 2012" and at various art spaces including March Meetings 2012, Sharjah; Subversion at the Cornerhouse, Manchester in April 2012 and the Global Art Forum, Doha in 2010.

Sahar Mandour

Sahar Mandour was born in 1977 in Beirut to a Lebanese mother and an Egyptian father. She studied psychology at Saint Joseph University in Lebanon. While studying, she went on to work as a journalist and has been an editor and journalist at *Assafir Newspaper* since 1998. Her work as a journalist focuses on subjects related to culture, youth issues, human rights and the arts. Many of her articles have been featured in translation in the French weekly *Courier International*. Mandour also edits *Sawt w Soura*, a daily media monitoring page, *Shabab*, a weekly youth supplement and *Mihalliyyat*, a local non-political news spread for *Assafir*. Mandour is the author of several novels including *32* (Dar Al Adab Publishers, Beirut, 2010), *Hobb Beirut* (A Beirut Love) (Dar Al Adab Publishers, 2009) and *Sa'arsom Najma Aala Jabeen Vienna (I'll Draw a Star On Vienna's Forehead)* (La Cedetheque and Dar Al-Shorouq Publishers, 2007). Her highly acclaimed novels have been met with positive critical reviews and both *32* and *Hobb Beirut* were best selling novels at the Beirut International Arab Book Fair.

OPEN REBELLION; HIDDEN SCRIPTS

Siniša Šikman

Actively engaged in the nonviolent struggle against regimes since 1991 as a high school kid; Siniša led students at Students protest 1996/97. His networked organization Serbian Students Movement became a fundament of OTPOR! ("Resistance!"), founded in October 1998, a movement in which he was a very active member but that finished with the Milosevic era in October 2000. Siniša then worked as a freelance trainer and has been a trainer with CANVAS (Center for Applied NonViolent Actions and Strategies) for the last five years. He conducted 46 strategic nonviolent struggle trainings with 764 participants from all over the world, including participants and movements who had pivotal role in changes in Ukraine, Georgia, Maldives, Egypt, etc. His expertise unites both partisan and NGO sector skills and knowledge.

Ahmed Maher

Ahmed Maher is the founder and general coordinator of April 6 Youth Movement in Egypt.

Ala'a Shehabi

Ala'a is an economics lecturer and former policy analyst at Rand Corporation. She co-founded Bahrain Watch, an organisation that seeks to promote effective, transparent and accountable governance in Bahrain.

Reinoud Leenders

Reinoud Leenders is Assistant Professor in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, and was recently appointed Reader in Middle East Politics at King's College, Department of War Studies, London. He formerly worked as Middle East analyst for the International Crisis Group based in Beirut (2002-2005). His research interests include Middle East politics generally and Syria, Lebanon and Iraq in particular, and focus on authoritarian governance, corruption, armed conflict and refugee issues. His recent publications include *Spoils of Truce: Corruption and State-Building in Postwar Lebanon* (Cornell University Press 2012) and *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran* (Co-edited with Steven Heydemann, Stanford University Press 2012). Personal website: <http://home.medewerker.uva.nl/r.e.c.leenders/>

Abdulnabi Alekry

AbdulNabi Hasan Alekry is the President of the Bahrain Transparency Society. He holds a BSs as an Agriculture engineer and completed his post-graduate studies in political science, human rights, UN system, civil society and transparency. Previously a researcher at Bahrain Center for Studies and Research, he took an active role in various research projects, including Forum for the Future, the UK decision to go to war in Iraq, migrant workers in the GCC...etc. He published several research papers in English and Arabic in the field of international affairs, human rights, political science reform, democratization, civil society, environment and water resources issues. He writes regularly for *Al Wasat news* and *Bahraini daily*.

Faraj Najem

Faraj Najem is a widely respected Libyan author, lecturer, historian, political commentator and advisor on Libyan matters, and a leading member of the Libyan diaspora in the UK. He has acted as a special advisor to the British Prime Minister and the Foreign Office as well as many colleges, universities and think tanks in Britain. He is a regular interviewee on Aljazeera, BBC, CNN, SKY etc. His book 'Tribe, Islam and State' is recognised as the seminal work on the tribal history of Libya. Following the February 2011 revolution in Libya, he founded the Forum for Democratic Libya with others, advocating "active citizenship & democratic participation" and served in the Commission for Advice & Support to National Transitional Council of Libya. Born in Benghazi, Libya, he came to the UK as a student in 1983. He soon found

out that he was seen by the Qaddafi's regime as "persona non grata". Since the revolution, he has returned to Libya on many occasions helping out with media appearances defending the military action against Qaddafi's troops and moderating the various revolutionaries' forces on the battle fields across Libya and most recently to host a series of seminars right across the country on electoral and constitutional reform. He is currently running for election to the Libyan National Assembly.

Yezid Sayigh

Yezid Sayigh is a senior associate at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, where his work focuses on the future political role of Arab armies, the resistance and reinvention of authoritarian regimes, and the Israel-Palestine conflict and peace process. Previously, Sayigh was professor of Middle East studies at King's College London. From 1994–2003, he served as assistant director of studies at the Centre of International Studies, Cambridge, and from 1998–2003, he headed the Middle East programme of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Sayigh was also an advisor and negotiator in the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks with Israel from 1991–1994. Since 1999, he has provided policy and technical consultancy on the permanent status peace talks and on Palestinian reform. Sayigh is the author of numerous publications including: *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (1997); *The Third World Beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change* (ed., Oxford, 1999); and *The Middle East and the Cold War* (ed., Oxford, 1997).

HUMOUR, SUFFERING AND RESISTANCE

Alaa Awad

Alaa Awad has been instructor in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Luxor, in the Department of Painting (Mural Painting Section) since 2006. He obtained his Master Degree from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Zamalek, Helwan University. He participated in a number of collective exhibitions inside and outside Egypt, and contributed to several workshops. Alaa has experience in implementing field murals using different materials. He carried out Graffiti art works in Egypt.

Mohamed Anwar

Mohamed Anwar, political cartoonist, graduated from the Faculty of Engineering – Cairo University Biomedical Engineering Department. During his academic study, he started to work as political cartoonist at "Elbadil" daily newspaper, then moved to work at "Almasry Alyoum" daily newspaper. Now he is senior cartoonist at "Rose-Elyoussef" daily newspaper.

Hicham Rahma

Hicham Rahma graduated from the animation department of the High Cinema Institute in 2005, and has worked in the Egyptian renaissance publishing house as graphic designer and illustrator for children comics magazines and book publications ever since. He is one of the leading members of Tok Tok comic magazine in Egypt, and is currently also working as a cartoonist at Almasry Alyoum. Hicham participated in a number of art fairs and events, including the Sharja book fair (UAE), Fibda comics Festival (Algeria), and the Arab spring comics workshop in Tetouan (Morocco).

Nader Srage

Nader Srage is a professor of linguistics at the Lebanese University since 1981. Throughout his professional career, he focused on functional socio-linguistics, and especially the relationship between language and society in its various levels, aspects and developments. He is currently working on a linguistic study regarding political slogans in Arab countries, in collaboration with the OIB. He received his PhD with honours from the University of Sorbonne (Paris III). He is member in various associations, including the International Society for Functional Linguistics and the Union of Arab Translators. He is the founder of the Beirut Urban Observatory,

through which he published two books and organized two conferences regarding cultural heritage in Beirut thus far. He is the author of 10 books in Arabic and French, and more than 200 articles. Amongst others, he is also an expert in communication and PR.

Mona Abaza

Mona Abaza is Professor of Sociology at the American University in Cairo. In 2009-2011, she was visiting Professor of Islamology, Department of Theology at Lund University. Previously she has been a visiting scholar in Singapore at the Institute for South East Asian Studies (ISEAS) 1990-1992, Kuala Lumpur 1995-1996, Paris (EHESS) 1994, Berlin (Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg) 1996-1997, Leiden (IIAS) 2002-2003, and Wassenaar (NIAS) 2006-2007. Her books include *Twentieth Century Egyptian Art: The Private Collection of Sherwet Shafei* (The American University Press, 2011), *The Changing Consumer Culture of Modern Egypt; Cairo's Urban Reshaping* (Brill/AUC Press, 2006), *Debates on Islam and Knowledge in Malaysia and Egypt; Shifting Worlds* (Routledge Curzon Press/UK, 2002), and *Islamic Education, Perceptions and Exchanges: Indonesian Students in Cairo* (Cahier d'Archipel, EHESS, Paris, 1994).

Sara Binay

Sara Binay studied Arabic Language and History. From 2005 to 2008 she was a research associate at the Orient-Institut Beirut. Her research interests include the Bedouin in classical Arabic literature (PhD thesis 2005), political humour in Lebanon and intercultural studies in Germany.

Khaled El Ekhatyar

Khaled works as an independent Syrian journalist and blogger. He is the founder of Roznamah, an online guide of cultural activities in Damascus. Khaled helped organise a number of cultural festivals in Syria, including Jazz Lives in Syria, Dox-Box Independent Documentary Film Festival, Oriental Landscape Music Festival, Golan Cultural Week, Crisis of Readership in the Arab World, and Secularism in the Arab Levant. He participated in cultural management, new-media, and human rights workshops in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, UK, Sweden and the US. What is more, he has a collection of poems in print.

Lisa Weeden

Lisa Weeden is the Mary R. Morton Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. Weeden specialised in comparative politics, the Middle East, political theory, feminist theory, and qualitative methods. In addition to various articles, Weeden is the author of *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago, 1999) and *PERIPHERAL VISIONS: Publics, Power and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago, 2008).

Thursday, 4 October 2012
Orient-Institut Beirut (Zokak el-Blat)

19:00 Keynote Lecture: Elias Khoury

Followed by reception in the garden of the Institute (all welcome)
Graffiti installations by Rana Jarbou

Friday, 5 October 2012
Bibliothèque Orientale/USJ
and Theatre Monnot (Ashrafieh)

11:00-11:30 Registration and coffee

11:30-14:30 Sound Messages: Popular Music and Social and Political Transformation (Part 1) at Bibliothèque Orientale

Yves Gonzalez-Quijano (Université de Lyon): Arab Rap: a Culture of Revolution and a Revolution in Culture

Jackson Allers (Cultural writer and film maker): Arab Hip Hop - Rhymes and Revolution

Nicolas Puig (URMIS/CEMAM, USJ): Critical Sounds from the Periphery: Palestinian Electro in Lebanon

Mark LeVine (University of California, Irvine): "Scripting" the Revolution: Music, movement, and the Arab Spring's Auratic Momentum

14:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-19:15 Linear and Non-Linear Narratives in the context of Arab Revolutions (Part 1) at Theatre Monnot

Matthias Kispert (D-Fuse and University of the Arts, London): Debates on Social Media and Revolution

Hassan Choubassi (European Graduate School/Lebanese International University): The Masses: From the Implosion of Fantasies to the Explosion of the Political. From Actual to Virtual to Augmented

17:00-17.30 Coffee Break

Monika Halkort (Queen's University Belfast): Counting versus Narration. The Database as Political Form

Lev Manovich (University of San Diego): How to See One Million Images

20:45 "Inverted Worlds - A Night of Independent Arab Short Films" at St Nicolas Stairs, Gemmayzeh (all welcome)

Saturday, 6 October 2012
Gulbenkian Theatre/LAU (Hamra)

10:00-10:30 Registration

10:30-14:45 Linear and Non-Linear Narratives in the context of Arab Revolutions (Part 2)

Marwan Kraidy (University of Pennsylvania/AUB): Walls of Contention: Virality, Remix and Self-Reflexivity in Revolutionary Graffiti in Beirut and Cairo

Lotte Fasshauer (Freie Universität Berlin): Revealing by Concealing: Lyrical Narratives and Performative Immediacy in the Video Works of Ghassan Salhab

Roula Haj-Ismail (Phd Candidate at EGS, amateur teacher and artist): The Non-Linearity in Transdisciplinarity and/or Let's Sweat it Out Instead

12:45-13.15 Coffee break

Amal Khalaf (Center for Possible Studies - Serpentine Gallery London): Circles to Squares: Bahrain's digital public sphere

Sahar Mandour (Assafir Newspaper, Beirut): قصة الأمس

14:45-16:00 Lunch

16:00-19:00 Sound Messages: Popular Music and Social and Political Transformation (Part 2)

Ines Dallaji (University of Vienna): Tunisian Rap Music and the Arab Spring: Revolutionary Anthems and Post-Revolutionary Tendencies

Stephan Prochazka (University of Vienna): The Voice of Freedom - Egyptian Revolution Pop: Provocation or Encouragement

Azza Madian, Nadia Abu Ghazi, Nihal Ragab (Cairo University): Protest Chants and Popular Music in the Arab Spring: the Case of Egypt (presented by Azza Madian)

Simon Dubois (Université Lumière Lyon II): Street Songs from the Syrian Protests

Sunday, 7 October 2012
Beirut Art Center (Jisr el-Wati)

11:30-12:00 Registration and coffee

12:00-15:00 Open Rebellion; Hidden Scripts (Part 1)

Sinisa Sikman (OTPOR! and Canvas, Serbia): Nonviolent Movements are Dictators' Worst Nightmares

Ahmed Maher (April 6 Movement, Egypt): After the Revolution in Egypt

Ala'a Shehabi (Economics lecturer and co-founder of Bahrain Watch): Configuring Dissent; Youth Resistance Movements in Bahrain in the Wake of the Arab Uprisings

Reinoud Leenders (University of Amsterdam/King's College London): The Onset of Syria's Popular Uprising: Opportunity, Networks, and Framing

15:00-16:15 Lunch

16:15-19:30 Humour, Suffering and Resistance (Part 1)

"Alaa Awad explains to Mona Abaza his Art" - a film by Rudolf Thome presented by **Mona Abaza Ala'a Awad** (Graffiti artist, Cairo): Mohammed Mahmud Street - Between Ancient Egyptian Tradition and The Modern Epic

Mohamed Anwar and Hicham Rahma (Tok Tok Magazine, Cairo): "Do You Like What is Happening?! The Country is Falling Down!"

Nader Srage (Lebanese University): "Dégage - Out - ارحل"
A Password that Transcends Arab Countries

21:30 Hip Hop Concert: Khat Thaleth at Metro Al Madina
(admission free, all welcome)

Monday, 8 October 2012
Orient-Institut Beirut (Zokak el-Blat)

09:30-10:00 Registration and coffee

10:00-13:00 Humour, Suffering and Resistance (Part 2)

Mona Abaza (AUC): Cairo's Murals and Graffiti: Memorial Spaces or Sardonic Resistance?

Sara Binay (University of Halle): Jokes - Indicators of Social and Political Change

Khaled El Ekhatyar (Syrian blogger and activist): Once Upon a Time There was a Homs... The Seventeen Revolutionary Muscles in the Syrian Intifada

Lisa Wedeen (University of Chicago): Humour in Dark Times

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-17:00 Open Rebellion; Hidden Scripts (Part 2)

Sinisa Sikman (OTPOR! and Canvas): Building Civil Society Structures

Abdulnabi Alekry (Bahrain Transparency Society, Bahrain): Bahrain: The Aftermath of 14 February Uprising

Faraj Najem (Libya specialist, Libya and UK): The State of the Media just before and during the Libyan Revolution: Impact, Violation and Challenges

Yezid Sayigh (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Beirut): Whose Army is it Anyway?

17:00-17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:00 Closing of Congress: Panel discussion with selected participants of each panel

More on: www.orient-institut.org
and www.facebook.com/invertedworlds
Contact: ccm@orient-institut.org

VENUES

Orient-Institut Beirut

Zokak el-Blat, Rue Hussein Beyhoum, 44 – right next to City International School
Tel: +961 | 359 423

Bibliothèque Orientale, Université St Joseph

Ashrafieh, Rue de l'Université Saint-Joseph
Tel: +961 | 421 810

Theatre Monnot

Ashrafieh – right next to Bibliothèque Orientale (see above)

St Nicolas Stairs “Daraj al-Fann”

Gemmayzeh – the large stairs in the middle of the main Gemmayzeh Street, Rue Gouraud.

Gulbenkian Theatre, Lebanese American University (LAU)

Hamra – LAU's Beirut campus is in the Koraytem district, four blocks south of Hamra street. If you are walking down Hamra street in the direction of traffic, you can turn left one block after the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Keep going straight (uphill) until you reach LAU's lower gate.

Beirut Art Center

Jisr el-Wati – Off Corniche an-Nahr. Building 13, Street 97, Zone 66 Adlieh, Beirut. Close to the Sunday market.
Tel: +961 | 397 018

Metro Al Madina

Saroulla Building, Hamra – right next to Masrah Al Madina on Hamra Street.
Tel: +961 | 753 021



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