واقع محترف
فيصل السمرة
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
لا يمكنني قراءة النصوص الصادرة عن الصور.
ثبت نمودارهای اینترنتی اجرا می‌کند. این نمودارها به‌طور کلی بررسی‌هایی از اثرات مختلفی روی عملکرد می‌پردازند.

در اینجا، محققان با استفاده از مدل‌های پیامدهای اجتماعی در یک مطالعه با میانگین ۳۰۰ نفر از جمعیت نمونه انجام پذیرفت و با استفاده از تحقیقات، بیانین و توصیه‌ها به‌طور کلی بررسی شد.

به‌طور کلی، این نمودارها می‌توانند به‌عنوان یک راهکار ابتکاری در بهبود عملکرد و پیامدهای اجتماعی در جامعه به‌کار رفته شوند.
فقد خفت تعرض وعَقَط مَحِيط "في دارة القوة عن عرشه في فترة 1968 في ديسبورت.

- في ذكرى العاشر الأول عباير المخرب: أعتقد أنه يلriages أن تقولي إن كان معرضاً وعَقَط مَحِيط رفعت 5% تقريبًا، هناك ذلك العينين، بإضافة إلى أصوات أخرى إلى المشروط، من ضمنها عناصر من قيادات سقوط (ويُراقب إلى) "في" وظائف في العشر (إضافة إلى الأعمال الثلاثة الكبرى للسعودية واللبنانية). كفاية وغيرها من الصور التي تُمكننا الآن من أكملها بشكل مثالي ومعزول، وضمنها صوراً تم إنتاجها قبل موعد اجتماعها.

- إن الحاضرة، والزائرين، والضيوف في الصورة، والمسجلين في الإنتاج، التي تكمن ممتعة وعَقَط مَحِيط "في" أدوات استهلاكهم، هو الأدوار والانضباط التي أدتها، في الواقع، يؤد إلى تطوير الصورة، ولن يخفيف عنها أكمل مشروط وعَقَط مَحِيط، في مختلف السياقات، أو في واحد من المشاهد. بالرغم من ذلك فإننا نستعرض عبارة مشتركة "ما يمكن أن نت строк على كل مادة من هذه المواد"، مثل ما كان في مناقشات سابقة، أو في مناقشات سابقة، أو في مناقشات سابقة. أضف إلى أن أحداً أخرى وما بيتهت هذا المشروط. ألا أنها لا تاحية، بالطبع ومحررة في دارة القوة، أنvari تعز: أوائل 2007.
الأعمال الفنية
الزمن الممتد، وذلك بزيادة منتجات العرض وال فهوش في وضع طفلين في بيئة العمل اليومية، لتعزيزهما. مع الوقت والشعور، إلى مستوى على
استيعابهما، وكذا: كما زاد المنتج العرض، زاد طفلياً، وبالتالي زاد
استيعابهما، وليس كما يقال في نظرية علاقات التعليم الثقافية، كما
زاد الشرف في الطبلا، وذلك لاستكمال دور الدخيلة الاجتماعية اليمنية
المعاصرة.

ارتجال: هو العمل الأول الذي أنتجته في سلسلة "وائق مُعرَّف" سنة
2005-2006. ويتعلق موضوعه من أن الآباء والأمهات والأخوة الإخون،
في أديان إنتاج الموسيقى الموسيقية (في الرحاب العاطفي المعاصر - "هده
الحارة المعاصرة، والعلاقات والإعلام، بالإعلام، بحثاً لدراسة السياسة والإعلام، وال التواصل
لدراسة السياق الثقافي، وبحثاً لدراسة المعنى والتحكيم في سياق معززة (من خلال سياق السياسة المعاصرة، وحباء، ولكن بأن يحكم العرض في الطبلا
"الحارة المعرفة، والحرب والطبلا، ولكن بأن يحكم العرض في الطبلا،

"الحارة المعرفة، والحرب والطبلا، ولكن بأن يحكم العرض في الطبلا،

> ارتجال

قديم | 2005 | 95873
كان سؤال: كيف لي أن أستخدم الأدوات نفسها، الأدوات والمادية والأخلاقية، في إنتاج واقع إفراطي آخر ينطوي على الأقل من دون الوقوع في العقلية والمادية، كالذي حدث مع الواقعة الإفراطية في القرن المحاربة الأولى بالنسبة للإفراط في الممارسة النافذة (الفلكية)، والمقابل مع إفراط الإفراط السني في ظل الانتقال السني السابق.

يعني آخر: إنتاج عمل ثان يحتوي على تطاوم دفاعي شخصي من خلال المخرج، وغير تطاوم آخر جماعي من خلال الجمهور، أي تحرير كل فرد في العالم- إذا استغلت، أن تنتج تطام الغلاة الم👬 خلال الممارسات التي تحرر لها بيهما، بعدهم من دون علم.

واقع محرّف

تصوير: النورزات

2020-205
وعليه، بدأت العمل بوضع كاميرا الفيديو في نقطة نائية، وأخذت بارتكاب الأداء أمامها باستخدام القماش الخام - الذي كنت أستخدمه للرسم - في بناء أو تشكيل شخصيات، ربما، درامية بسرية. وشهدها في لحظة ولادة إله أخرى من حظام الأول.

كلاً ما أعاده نبراة مفتوحة على ما قبلها، ونبرة مفتوحة على ما بعدها، وفعل الأداء هو حركة على القماش حول رأسى ويجري تشكيك عمانية وثابتة لتترانيم العامل والآلهة وينبع عنها الفضاء. تكّمل كل منها من رحم الآخر.

هذين أصبعى يجري طويل من الإرفاعات للاختيار للأمثلة فقط تقديم هذا العمل (ويعود ليكون يبدي بصورة مختلفة).

ملحة أعتقد أن علاقة العلاقة بين العمانة والتابع والتقنيات (الكنسيم)، وبين سطوة تأثير سودة الواقع الافتراضي المحيط بما عنيتا واسعة.

واقع محرف
تصوير فتحي الرآقي

2013-2015
بات واقعاً سارع ديوز في كتابه "سينما 2، لحركة السيطرة" مقدمة أودت أن أبسطوا في هذا المقام كمجرد لوجيا ناجة تواجه توليف الصورة المتحركة في مين الكشفيات عن طريق استخدام كاميرا الفيديو أو الكاميرا السينمائية.

يقول ديوز إن السينما هي بدائيتها كانت نقطة النقطة السيطرة الثاني، وبالتالي فإن إنجاز الكاميرا يتبعه مع جهاز عرسي المثير، أي من نقطة ثانية أيضاً. وبالتالي هو زمن نادراً وتواتر، ولكنه مجرد في الوقت نفسه.

هنا أدخل الأقل إن هذه المرحلة الأكبر من بداية التفاعل مع الصورة المتحركة أو "حركة الحركة" هي التي شكلت في اقتصادها تنفيذ الفيديو الشهير، أي من كاميرا ثابتة نادراً (يمكن أن يدخل الفيديو الذي ينتمي هنا). وضعت ديوز إن تطور السينما فيما بعد أشياء من الكاميرا المتحركة وتحرير نقطة النقطة السيطرة من نقطة العرض (وهنا فيديو السينما).
ما أريد أن أصل إليه هو أن استخدام الصورة المتحركة في العمل الفني التشكيلي ما اصطلح على تسمية "فن الفيديو": يجب أن يأتي للتكاثف والانقلال في توطين حس الفنان وكيفه من رواية ذلك العمل. ليس من أجل السرور، وربما التشكيل كما هو الحال في السينما، وأحيانًا ذلك بالفرق بين الشعر والرواية.

على هذا الأساس، فإن الإطلاع كاميرا التبدوي في عمل هو دائماً انتظار إجابة.

العرض، وذلك جاء عرض "الإطلاع إلى تراويح" "النظر في الحفرة" على الأرض وليس الهدف لأنه كان انتظار التكاثر.

النظر في الحفرة

تيمور يعاني | 2007 | A'241
The circumstances surrounding the making of Earth to earth and Looking in the hole:

- In the beginning, there was Earth to earth. The preliminary plans for its production go back to 2005. Changes and revisions continued to be made until mid-2007 when its execution began. I needed a hole as deep as the length of a man so that I could carry out the scene in which a head emerges from the earth (as required by the scenario). For a few days after the hole was created, I stared into it and I mentally questioned the possibilities for the scene, doing exactly as I do when I look at a blank piece of paper or stretch of canvas. It was at this point that the idea for my next video Looking in the hole was born. As the title suggests, that is precisely what happened when I intimated work on the piece immediately after having finished Earth to earth: I looked in the hole...

Because of their linked production, I think of Earth to earth and Looking in the hole as twins that make up one installation and that are to be displayed within a single installation space.

- Earth to earth is a reminder of the cycle of the actual reality of humans in juxtaposition with the hypothetical (illusory) reality we live in and identify with.

- Looking in the hole signals that a gap has developed in our mental and visual memory so large that we now no longer see our true selves when we look into the mirror; we see our masks instead.

Faisal Samra
2007

Malaibisyat Etnig "Tharab al-Tharab" "al-nizar al-afrad"

"Tharab al-Tharab" was a project in which the participants were given the freedom to express their feelings, problems, and experiences. The purpose of the project was to provide a space for self-expression and exploration of one's identity.

"al-nizar al-afrad" was a workshop that aimed to help participants understand and express their emotions and experiences through various artistic forms, such as painting, writing, and music.

In the following years, the project continued to evolve and expand, with new workshops and exhibitions being held in various locations. The goal was to create a supportive and empowering environment for individuals to explore their identities and express themselves freely.

2007
On this basis, the direction in which any of my video art pieces is projected is always the same as that in which the video camera was pointed during its filming. It is for this reason that the videos Earth to earth and Looking in the hole are projected onto the floor and not the wall. This was, after all, the way in which they were shot, with the video camera pointed towards scenes unfolding in/on the ground.

The idea I wish to emphasize most, however, is that the choice to use moving pictures in a visual art piece or in what has been labeled as "video art" should derive from an artist's urge to document his senses or express his idea more intensely and not from a desire to narrate or maybe even entertain as is the case with cinema. I envision the difference between video art and cinema to be similar to that between poetry and the novel.
Where does video art end and cinema begin?

Gilles Deleuze discusses in his book Cinema 2: The Movement-Image a statement that I wished to cite in this commentary as a source for my views on the incorporation of the moving picture into the visual arts by means of the latter’s adoption of the video or cinematic camera.

Deleuze says that in the beginning, in cinema, images were recorded/captured from a fixed point and, as such, the direction of the video camera during shooting was one with that of the film projector during screening for the projector was placed at a fixed point as well.

I interject here to say that this early period in the beginning of dealing with the moving picture (or picture of movement) is what appeals to me most in that what transpired then was appropriated by video art. In other words, video art is always filmed from a fixed camera. Indeed, video art ends here, with this development. Deleuze adds that further progression of cinema came with the introduction of the moving video camera and, consequently, the separation of the once-fixed point from which a video was shot from the point from which it was projected. This is where cinema really begins...

Earth to earth ➤

Video installation | 2007 | 3’22’’
Based on this, I began by placing a video camera at a fixed point, and I took to improvising performances in front of it using a sheet of canvas, the same canvas as the one I normally paint on, to construct theatrical characters. I destroyed the characters I made instantaneously - the moment they were born - in order to build new ones from their ruins.

Every performed act, every gesture, has an open beginning (open onto that which has preceded it) and an open ending (open onto that which ensures). The performed act, in this instance, was the folding of the canvas around my head and face to fashion a turban and veil. The collection of turbans and veils that I created became like masks, each of which was born from the womb of another.

I ended up with a long video of improvised acts from which I selected three to present in this work. Each of the three acts exhibits different aesthetic, specifically color, qualities.

Note: I believe that the symbolic link between turbans, veils, masks, as well as the act of masking and the effect of being engulfed by an encroaching hypothetical (illusory) reality is obvious.
Initially, the question was: How can I use these same tools (the performed act, the camera, and the computer) to create an alternative hypothetical reality, one which rejects the reality we are immersed in without immediately reducing itself to a set of clichés that are an almost certain product of direct and impassioned rhetoric? This is, after all, what happened with the social realist art that emerged in the Soviet Union, the art of a movement which aimed to fight against the capitalist system but did so in an overly direct, self-promoting manner, a manner ridden with excessive and exaggerated communist propaganda.

The answer to this question was the production of an artwork that simultaneously contained within it a personalized self-defense system - insinuated at through the distinct approach taken towards the subject of the work - as well as a statement emphasizing the necessity of collective resistance - expressed through the overarching concept of the piece. In other words, the answer was to create a work of art that would instigate every individual, if possible, to produce his own self defense system, a shield against the visual, mental, and psychological campaigns being waged against us day after day, whether we are aware of them or not.

Distorted Reality
Photography | 2005 - 2007
Improvisation, a video made in 2005, is the first work that I produced in the ongoing series Distorted Reality. Its underlying concept evolved from an understanding of the performed act (the gesture), the camera, and the computer as tools which are employed to create the warped images that make up the hypothetical (illusory) reality that we live in, a reality that has been twisted and contorted. These tools are continuously (ab)used in commercials and advertisements as well as by politicians and the mass-media. The distorted reality that results from their misuse or manipulation is parallel to that of our actual lives but is also, in several ways, in control of it. This skewed reality takes over our lives through its agents’ artful handling of the universally known “free” market – through their orchestrated treatment of supply and demand. The catch in their conduction of the market is that supply, in fact, determines demand and not the other way around; supply dictates demand through the constant increase in the variety of available products as well as in the multitude of ways in which these products are presented as offering solutions to the problems that riddle our daily lives. The never-ending and unremitting proliferation of goods turns us eventually, over time and with developed habit, into addicted users. And so, in truth, it is that with the current surge in supplied products, there is a reactionary surge in demand and not, as the traditional market theory states, that as supply increases, demand decreases naturally. Alas, the hellish cycle of contemporary economic chaos has already been set into frantic motion.
Artworks
A: The motive behind this choice is actually twofold. First of all, I wanted to establish a direct tension between the camera (the medium) and myself (the subject). Secondly, I don’t think that I would have come as close as I did to achieving the effects I desired had I directed another performer, specifically because of the highly improvisational nature of the performances that were carried out.

Q: It seems that the sources of the imagery that you have used in your artistic oeuvre are never-ending: at times local and at times global, in an instance contemporary and in another historical. What about the imagery that you have employed in Distorted Reality? What types of images have you utilized in this work? Why have you chosen these particular ones? Where were they derived from and what have they been inspired by?

A: The outfits and objects that appear in the photographs and videos that make up Distorted Reality are tools that I have employed in my performances. Like an actor in the theatre, I have many masks, costumes, and props. The choice of which of these to use is made based on what could be hinted at through them. For example, in one performance, I parodied the stereotypical portrayal of warriors like Don Quixote. In this act, I employed a fluorescent light as though it were an arm or a sword. Of special significance is the fact that it was my treatment of such materials in my performances that produced the sense of motion that is so vividly present in my still photographs.

Q: How is the Distorted Reality exhibition held at Darat al Funun different from the one held at XVA Gallery in Dubai in March of 2007?

A: The exhibition in Dubai was the first showing of the work. I guess you could think of it as Distorted Reality I. Since then, I have added more pieces to the project including two video installations (Earth to Earth and Looking in the Hole) as well as the triptychs of the large photographs.

Q: How has Distorted Reality developed since Distorted Reality I? What lies ahead?

A: I would say that the works that I have made since Distorted Reality I are an extension of what has already been done in the project. I am currently working on continuing Distorted Reality and adding other pieces to it. When this project will end, however, even I do not know.

Nadja al Issa,
Researcher and editor at Darat al Funun
September 2007
Q: Why has this work been called Improvisation when its overall structure has been staged and when similar versions of it have been performed numerous times?

A: All artwork begins with improvisation. When the thinking process surrounding a work starts, even before any physical labor is made, improvisation starts. Improvisation continues until the work is finished, regardless of the final form that it takes. In this piece, I improvised in front of a camera. While each gesture was being played out, I was thinking, thinking about what my following gesture would be. However, the minute that any one of these gestures was executed, it was translated from thought into action, was born, was also the minute in which it died. Every action, after all, has a beginning (a birth) and an ending (a death). As such, every gesture that I performed ended — died — instantly. This is the peculiar nature of creation. Creation is a continuous cycle of construction and destruction. Thus, any act of destruction could be viewed as an act of construction and vice versa. On the other hand, the minute a work is looked at or played, the gestures made within it, and even the work itself, are resuscitated, are brought back to life.

Q: So you're suggesting that any gesture made in a work is revived each time that work is viewed or watched?

A: I believe the viewer or audience to be an integral part of every artwork. In fact, in my view, all of the artwork, the viewer, and the artist are active, interdependent players in any act of artistic creation; the feat of producing a work of art is somewhat triangular in form as every artistic undertaking has to move and negotiate its way between these three participants. Any creative initiative that is made is, thus, never really final or complete. So, while it is undeniable that each artwork contains within it something of its creator (the artist), it also undoubtedly has an existence independent of him.

Oftentimes, I look at a previous work of mine and I have different ideas about the work or what it means than the ones that I had at the time of its making. Sometimes, I don't even recognize myself as that work's artist just when I look at an old photograph of me and I do not see myself in it. This experience, the experience of not being familiar with one's self, factors as a central idea in the video Improvisation II. The video explores the almost impossibility, at present, of finding one's true self when looking in the mirror. In looking in the hole, a kind of symbolic hide and seek is being played out or performed by the inner or true self.

Q: You have just talked about having named your work Improvisation because, as you stated, that is how it began and how it unfolded, yet you have also claimed that all artwork begins with and develops through improvisation. Why is it then that this particular piece is titled as such? Why isn't it that any other or maybe even every other one is called so?

A: As I have mentioned before, I believe that the initiative behind the creation of any work of art starts with improvisation. I chose to call this particular work Improvisation, however, because I wanted to illuminate, by way of it, this specific facet of artwork and image creation.

Q: The video Improvisation consists of several takes: "Improvisation I," "Improvisation II" and "Improvisation III." In each take, you are seen as though coconning yourself in canvas. Every sequence begins with you walking on, already heavily draped in cloth and stirring, and ends with you walking off, still draped and still stirring. Why have you chosen to include no climactic point or major development within the takes? Furthermore, all of the takes are quite similar to one another with the exception of the stark difference in their color schemes. Why the variation in color?

A: In Improvisation, I moved about underneath sheets of canvas so as to create fantastical forms and imaginative personas. For the entire duration of this performance, I was continually thinking about the possibilities of shapes and figures that any one movement could make. With each action I carried out, I was consciously building on or changing a form that a previous action had constructed; I was formulating something new out of something that already existed. In every single one of the takes of Improvisation, I composed my act as I went along, blindly, for I could not see the formations that I was making as they were being made. It was important for me, however, to try, as much as I could, to produce a variety of characters for aesthetic purposes. It is for these same reasons as well that I focused on having different visual components — diverse lighting, color schemes, perspectives, and overall feels — in and sometimes within each take. Basically, in improvisation, the same concept is explored throughout in a similar manner but with a changing physiognomy.

As for the question regarding the lack of a climactic point or a major change in all of the takes, each take — each improvisation — shows footage from one filmed session. For every session, I pressed record and then improvised in front of the camera. When I was finished, I simply walked off and pressed stop. The resulting footage was, of course, edited and cut down. The reason why I chose to conduct and arrange the performances in this way is, I suppose, related to the nature of the performed act, which I have already talked about in detail, as something that ends the moment it begins.

Q: You are both the subject and the producer of most of the works in Distorted Reality. Why have you chosen to position yourself as the two?
Q: What do you think your individual approach or self-defense system tells you about yourself?

A: I suppose that answering a question like that would be somewhat similar to psycho-analyzing myself. I think that the aesthetic of the work that I have created and the slant that I have taken towards its subject are playful. In Distorted Reality, I poke fun at the hypnosis that we are undergoing and at how hypnotized by image producers we have become. At the same time, I think that the commentary that I make through the project is sharp, critical, and satirical. Distorted Reality has a sort of double personality then, mature and solemn in its message yet childish and good-humored in its method, potentially reflecting certain aspects of my character and of my attitude on the whole.

I always want for my work to be lighthearted both visually as well as in its conceptual take. When I produce art, it is vital that I enjoy the images that I have made, that I savor the visual factors that I have incorporated into my work. My pieces are generally highly formally thought out and developed and yet conceptually provocative at the same time. It is key to me that there be something aesthetic which attracts the viewer first. I have to catch the viewer's eye and then I can take him to other layers of meaning. I think that this also tells something about me, particularly about me as an artist.

Q: It seems that materiality/plasticity has been a constant concern in your previous artworks. In the past, specifically in the Ma'tollapag, you have broken down the traditional canvas and moved away from it, blurring the physical boundaries existent between sculptural forms and paintings. Throughout your artistic career, you have traversed between materials and media as well as combined them. What of your treatment of performance, photography, and video? How have the material qualities or natures of these media factored into the work that you have produced with them?

A: I think of the medium as something that is an internal necessity of the artwork. What I mean by this is that the medium makes demands and imposes itself on the final product. When I am considering a piece, I invariably choose the medium which I feel helps me most eloquently convey the concept I wish to deal with. Sometimes I come up with a concept and then I settle on a working medium or media and other times I decide on the two simultaneously but I never think of a medium first and then search for a working concept.

Distorted Reality began with Improvisation. The idea came to me when I realized the extent to which our lives have been invaded by fake images and lies. I was looking outside of my car window one day and it suddenly struck me that there was not a single meter in my entire field of vision that was not covered with images, advertisements, or information. Even the radio that I was listening to was frequently being interrupted by commercials and announcements. I woke up abruptly then and I understood that I, among others, was being drugged, on both an aural and a visual level, with an overdose of illusion, an illusion of an altered reality. I immediately felt a desperate need to escape it, and then I thought about what was going on all around me, when I really focused on what it was that I was observing. I began to see things more clearly. I asked myself, "What do I need to do?" and the first thing that came to me was "I need to improvis." Then I thought, "What are the tools that are used to distort reality?" Ultimately, I arrived at the answer: "Images, and above all, performance." So I decided to perform improvisations.

In the act that followed, in the performances that I put on, I employed the same canvas as the one that I employ in painting, but, this time, I wrapped myself up in it. It was a complete improvisation - a spontaneous gesture. I developed this performance for a while until, eventually, I stopped. At that point, I thought, once again, about what to do next, about where to go from there. I decided to take off from the performed act that I had carried out and I began to take photographs of various performances. Afterwards, in 2006, I started to develop another video to complement and add to the photographs that I had amassed.
Notes from a Conversation with Faisal Samra

Q: In a statement on your work, Brahim Alalouf, previously the director of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, writes: "Art is nothing but an instrument of expression and knowledge, which is far different from the ordinary perception of reality that is provided by our senses. Art form is precisely the medium of that other vision which the artist gets to realize through his work. This alternative perception can only be translated and conveyed by works of art." The unique way in which art understands, interprets, and depicts the outer world appears central to Distorted Reality. What is your view on how reality is experienced through art? How does it differ from the ways in which reality is absorbed through our senses? In what ways are they represented on, if in fact they are, in Distorted Reality? What about the relationship between art and the real world? How do you see this relation? Has it been handled at all in your work?

A: I firmly believe that the role of art is to expose the naked truth, to unmask the disguised reality. Today, what we see in the world around us is not real. Art goes beyond the fake exterior or covering of things as we superficially experience them. Digging past layers of pretense, it attempts to reveal the truth that lies concealed within. In my view, one of the major functions of art is to act as a raw documentary of its social time. Art is, indeed, a form of record of artists’ reactions to the world that they live in. Among its main roles then is the documentation of the feelings, perceptions, and thoughts artists have regarding their surroundings. In such a sense, in terms of its function, art is intrinsically linked. But in another way, with respect to its content, art is actually time-specific. Any artwork, after all, deals with the reality of a very particular period of time. In fact, I would go so far as to say that there is no such thing as purely abstract art or utter abstraction. All art is linked to reality at some level or in a certain way. Abstract art conveys our conceptual perception of the physical world but does so in a much more nuanced manner than its figurative precedent. Indeed, I see abstraction as a reflection or a manifestation of our more developed way of thinking and perceiving. Thus, I resolutely uphold that art should remain frank and bold about its time and that it should penetrate into the heart of the truth.

Q: You have talked about how artists often manipulate rather than represent reality in their work in order to portray the real or at least aspects of the truth. You claim, in a personal statement written on Distorted Reality, that the artist is a "frame-made-up image producer," who distorts reality in a way to produce an image that unveils the hidden truth... and that vehemently opposes and fights against existing dolled-up images." In your photographs and video, you have constructed strange and sometimes surreal compositions and happenings so as to comment on the image in contemporary society. Can you explain why you have opted to distort instead of directly delineate reality in your attempt to expose what is true and what is false? What does such an alternative approach to expression or communication offer?

A: To begin with, I consider my work to be documentary but only in the indirect meaning of the word. My art does not directly log situations or, more generally, chronic conditions. Rather, it indirectly documents them, as most art does, by, as I stated previously, capturing my sensations toward, responses to, discriminations of, and ideas about the world that I inhabit. What I did in Distorted Reality is somewhat similar to what the Dadaists did, particularly in their ready-mades. I took some of these disposed objects and transformed them through the most functional context (advertisements, mass media, and so on) and put it in a wholly different one (in a frame, in a gallery). By doing so, I added another dimension to the imagery and what resulted was an artwork.

In Distorted Reality, I engaged in a kind of catch 22. I constructed a warped reality in order to illustrate that the reality that we believe to be true is actually continuously being twisted and made-up by wide-spread image producers. Through the performances that I carried out, I depicted what is being done to us or, more accurately, what we are being brainwash into doing to ourselves. I suggest that it is not only what surrounds us that is being altered in the process; we ourselves are being changed as well. It is a venomous culture, that which is being sold to us, a detrimental way of life that we are eagerly buying into, that makes each and every one of us alike, talks alike, dresses alike, and even eats similar food. And so, by means of this obliterating lifestyle, our identity – our unique face – is steadily being robbed. In Distorted Reality, I have imitated or better yet simulated the experience of being immersed in, even a part of, a fake reality, of being under the charm of a manufactured and managed culture.

With Distorted Reality, I have actually undressed a question that has troubled me rather than expressed an idea. Above everything else, this is a question about the distance distorted reality is from its functional context (advertisements, mass media, and so on) and put it in a wholly different one (in a frame, in a gallery). By doing so, I added another dimension to the imagery and what resulted was an artwork.
physical exertion) and embroidery (deemed quintessentially feminine, painstaking, time-consum ing, fragile and precise). In her paintings she also creates an unlikely union between rough, stretched, taut canvas and messy, meandering, unruly thread, maybe spun from silk or cotton but rather more likely a synthetic imitation or a combination of the two.

Jananne Al-Ani explores constructions of otherness, orientalist fantasies of full exposure and the constantly shifting symbolism of the veil, Ghzawi’s videos and performance pieces toy with the notion of social and political implications of dress, whether a white wedding gown or a black chador, Shadafarin Ghadriyan’s, in her series of photographs titled “Like Everyday,” includes a wrt portrait of a veil draped over a broomstick.

These artists delve directly and indirectly into the relationship between fabric and sexual identity, and at the same time problematize assumptions that Middle Eastern textiles are necessarily spicy and exotic or nostalgic and folkloric. Like the photographs of Tarek Al-Ghoussein, who primes images of construction sites in Sharjah (reminiscent of the barrier wall on Palestine) on delicate Japanese rice paper to evoke contradiction, this work is all somehow informed by the era of globalization and the flow of free trade, where goods travel more easily than bodies, and like Hoda Barakat’s novel The Tiller of Waters, in which the central protagonist uses the bolts of fabric in his father’s derelict shop in downtown Beirut to recount stories from his childhood like a modern-day male version of Sheherazade, they illustrate the capacity of fabrics, textiles and clothes to hold histories over time and carry immense metaphorical weight in contemporary cultural production.

In Samma’s Distorted Reality (Improvisation), the artist repeatedly wraps rough canvas around his head and body, contorting his posture, twisting his limbs and covering himself in folds of fabric to the point of near suffocation. Though totally improvised as the title dictates, the video possesses the stirring beauty of a carefully choreographed contemporary dance. The canvas stands as in both the artist’s skin — and by extension the construction of the self — and the reality of the world that has been twisted and distorted by false advertising and images that tell lies rather than truths.

It is striking that Samma, in criticizing a media landscape like a retreat of Guy Debord, does not — as so many more shallow contemporary arts works would do — replicate the glut of images he is condemning for the psychic damage they cause. He does not resort to their powers to seduce. Instead, he invents a performance that emulates a process — not an outcome or a static condition — using a material that has always shaped the spine of his work.

In the photographic series that supports this particular video, one finds the artist in freeze frames of a similar performance.

Movement is indicated in the body and the blue of canvas as it is twisted and spun. The hand of the artist is no longer present, as it would have been in the brushstrokes of a painting. But the artist retains his presence, his agency and command over the creative act, through his depiction of the body.

Then, in the digital manipulation of each image, his body is obscured, even added, with things such as a parrot, a Venetian mask or a bouquet of roses. These additions are, in a sense, both the fleshing signifiers from which one is alienated in contemporary surveillance with empty nods, and tokens of easy aesthetic pleasure. Again, Samma is questioning what it means to create images in a world already saturated with them and too heavily mediaized to ensure any productive meaning may be conveyed or allowed to cut through the rest of the riffraff. There was a point in Samma’s career in which he said he had accumulated so much visual and sensational baggage that he had to “burn the luggage,” to strip down and renew. The materials he collected to stoke both personal and collective memories had to be cleared, in a process not unlike that undertaken in Rabit Moure’s performance piece “Make Me Stop Smoking,” in which the power of an archive, like history, is dismantled and defused, “Distorted Reality” embarks on a similar process of wiping the slate clean.

The lingering sadness, even loneliness of the exhibition stems from an understanding that the material in question — advertising and the stuff of mass-media — is useless. It doesn’t recall childhood or homeland. It is part of a relentless, global data stream, white noise without the echo or even the romance of a ghost in the machine. To do this material that is itself data rather than paint or clay is a defiant stand, as if Samma is taking on a challenge and responding with proof that he will master this media like any other. Whatever becomes the tool of his times, he will bend to his practice.

This is a reassertion of the artists’ role in society, and probably somewhere in the mix, a restaging of masculinity as well — the body active, the canvas, the movements as decisive as those captured in iconic films of Jackson Pollock striding around paintings laid out on the floor. Samma once said that he never wanted to be a slave to materials, that he chose materials for their spirit and character and that he employed them in so far as they suited what he wanted to say. Such an approach lends Samma’s work, over so many stages of development, its consistency. As the curator Frans-Jozef once remarked, Samma’s artworks function as “message carriers, accumulations of lives, experiences, impressions, sensations and the memory of it all.” It is curious that critics have time and again called Samma a postmodernist. He is more accurately a humanist to the core.

Kaelen Wilson-Goldie, November 2007
Art critic and editor at The Daily Star, Lebanon
The art of Faisal Samra from paint, pen and clay to the digital image and data file

Kaleen Wilsson-Goelde

The shift in Faisal Samra’s artistic practice from drawings, paintings and sculptures to accumulative installations, digital photographs and performative videos would seem, to the casual observer, to be dramatic, signifying a sharp break from one mode of art—making toward a quick and total embrace of another. Yet closer consideration of Samra’s oeuvre over more than three decades of creative output reveals both a seamless progression and a steady commitment to art as a visceral expression of lived experience. Samra’s medium of choice may change, but his desire to find forms with the capacity to manifest all the forces that act upon one’s being—one such as the formation of identity, the triumph of meekness, the struggle to build up a sense of self—strip down everything extraneous to a spiritual or emotional core—this is constant across his art.

The exhibition “Distorted Reality” at Darat al-Fanun hinges on trilogies. There are three videos—Distorted Reality (Improvization), Distorted Reality (Looking in the Hole) and Distorted Reality (Earth to Earth)—and several photographic series that are similarly grouped by three. The number is significant in so far as it suggests a process—with a beginning, middle and end—and a practice—in what now seems like that old fashioned notion of try, try and try again. These trilogies speak of efforts, attempts and endeavors, and of challenges, pursuits and possible narratives.

Distorted Reality (Improvization) is itself divided into three acts. As the artist explains in a previous interview: “Every action...has a beginning (a birth) and an ending (a death). As such, every gesture that I perform ended—died—instantly. This is the peculiar nature of creation. Creation is, in essence, a continuous cycle of construction and destruction.”

The architecture of Samra’s latest body of work—on both the micro and macro levels—builds into its very structure a consideration of the creative act, and what it means to conceive, execute and bear a work of art. That “Distorted Reality” does this while also skewering a contemporary landscape that is littered with emptiness, meaningless images and cluttered with signifiers floating for so long without their referents as to become junk amounts to a serious and sustained meditation on what it means to be an artist in the here and now.

A Saudi national who was born and raised in Bahrain, Samra studied fine art in Paris and worked for a time with the Institute du Monde Arabe. He traveled to Morocco in the 1950s to research handcrafted design objects and Islamic aesthetics in Fez, Marakech and Rabat. In the early part of this decade, he lived and worked in Beirut and Amman. He maintains a studio in Bahrain to this day. He has shown steadily in the Middle East and Europe since the mid 1970s. His solo exhibition at Darat al-Fanun in the second he has staged under the same title. One imagines a third is surely in the works.

Samra became widely known for the paintings he liberated from frames—he painted, layered and otherwise piled up material on large-scale canvases and then hung them from bamboo. His series “Bent” featured canvases that were painted, folded, sewn and suspended. These works broke the boundary between pictorial and sculptural space. Samra wasn’t the first to do this, but it was a rebellion nonetheless. “I would like to apologize to the viewer who is looking in my work for ornamental beauty,” he once wrote in an exhibition catalogue. “I am a lover of the beauty of the soul, which I strive to achieve through unadorned material.”

In an interview with Susan Eisner Eley, he said: “I am part of a long tradition of abstract practitioners who prefer not to imitate reality but to explore how it makes us feel and behave.” That last verb is key. The subject in Samra’s work seems to be both artist and viewer at once, and neither is static. Both are dynamic players in a viewer matrix of actions and reactions. As such, one can detect empathy and a generosity of spirit in his art. His pieces don’t speak for you, through you or at you but rather of you and with you. He renders visual the experiences you share from the root of your humanity.

As Samra moves into photographs and videos, into digital images and data files that seem so odd with his earlier and entirely tactile studio practice, the evocation of touch and texture remains paramount. To run through the list of materials Samra has employed over the years, one finds the following: glass, terra cotta, wire mesh, tie-dyed cloth, toy animals, dismembered dolls, henna, gilded metal, steel, India ink, modelling clay, transparent plastic, blowpipe, charcoal, sand, iron, mud, feathers, yarn, newspaper clippings, pages torn from elementary school textbooks, faded posters of Indian film stars from the 1950s, reproductions of Islamic miniatures, old photographs of Lebanese and Egyptian singers and fabrics, always fabrics, and specifically cottons.

The use of textiles, broadly speaking, constitutes a complex sub-genre of cultural production throughout the Arab world, starting with historical accounts—of and perpetuated in apparent nostalgia for—The Silk Road. Contemporary artists with roots across the Middle East have, in the past decade, appropriated fabrics in their work to stage sensuality, sexuality and more often than not a radical feminist critique of society and its calibration toward gender equality.

Ghada Amer, for example, juxtaposes abstract expressionism (masculine, muscular, produced by the body and the force of
Faisal Samra

1956 Born in Bahrain, of South-Arabian nationality, currently works as an independent artist with a studio based in Bahrain
1980 Graduated with an honors degree from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, France
1987 Moved to Paris and worked as a fine arts & graphics consultant at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France
1993 - 94 Conducted personal research on Islamic design and handicraft work in Fez, Marrakech, and Rabat, Morocco
1992 - 93 Lived and worked in Beirut
2003 - 04 Gave courses and workshops in drawing and painting at the Department of Visual Arts, The University of Jordan, Amman
2005 Resident artist at the École Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
2005 Jury member at the Alexandria Biennale, Egypt

Solo Exhibitions
2002 Distorted Reality, The Khalid Shoman Foundation - Darat al Funun, Amman, Jordan
2007 Distorted Reality, ZVA Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2007 Searching for Beauty, Sultan Gallery, Kuwait City, Kuwait
2003 Work on Paper, Aga Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2003 Third World Citizen, Fennel Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
1999 Repeated and Different, Galerie Epreuve d’Artiste, Beirut, Lebanon

1986 Nišbījī, The Khalid Shoman Foundation - Darat al Funun, Amman, Jordan
1992 Sensation Plastique, Galerie Seltzer-Lejeune, Paris, France
1991 Le Pli, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France
1990 Suspensions (Mu'allajat), Rochan Gallery, London, UK
1989 Acte Monomade, Galerie Etienne Dinet, Paris, France

Collective Exhibitions and Projects
2002 Christie’s Auction, Dubai, UAE
2007 - 08 Languages of the Desert: Contemporary Arab Art from the Gulf States, Public Library and Cultural Center, Abu Dhabi, UAE; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France; Kunstmuseum, Bonn, Germany
2006 Christie’s Auction, Dubai, UAE
2006 Warda into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East, British Museum, London, UK
2004 Museum der Arbeit, Hamburg, Germany
2004 Frankfurt Book Fair (Book Art Expo), Frankfurt, Germany
2004 Overgaden Institute of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark (Exhibition of video art)
2003 1st International Cairo Biennale, Cairo, Egypt
2001 Contemporary Arab Art, Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
2000 Egino’s Project, New York, New York, USA
1998 LeBourget 98, United Nations, New York, New York, USA
1997 Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition, The Khalid Shoman Foundation-Darat al Funun, Amman, Jordan

1992 Europe’Art, Geneva Palexpo, Geneva, Switzerland
1995 Participated in the exhibition held on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, Dialogues of Peace, Geneva, Switzerland (Six artists selected worldwide)
1992 Participated in The Hope and Optimism Portfolio, Magdalene College, Oxford, UK
1990 Annual Concours, Suresnes, France (Theme: Roots)
1997 Arabic Graphic Arts, Musée de la Culture, Le Havre, France
1983 Salon de Mai, Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris, France
1982 UNESCO, Paris, France
1977 Concours David Vaillès, Paris, France
1978 Drawing Masters, Saint-Remy-les-Cherroise, France
1977 Maison des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France
1975 - 79 Annual Drawing Exhibition, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, France (Received three awards)

Museum and Private Collection Acquisitions
2006 Saeb Eigner Collection, London, UK
2006 Abdul Rahman Al Dawais Collection, UAE
2006 British Museum, London, UK
2004 Buch Druck Kunst e.V. (Book Art Museum), Hamburg, Germany
2000 Kirda Collection, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
2000 Al Mansoura Foundation, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
1996 Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman, Jordan
1996 The Khalid Shoman Private Collection, Amman, Jordan
1988 National Museum of Art, Mexico City, Mexico
1982 Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France