#02
CRISIS OF HISTORY
FIGHT HISTORY ■ STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE
CURATED BY ROBERT KLUIJVER IN COLLABORATION WITH FRAMER FRAMED
EVERY TUESDAY EVENING A PUBLIC PROGRAM IN ADDITION TO THE EXHIBITION:
FILMS, PERFORMANCES, DEBATE & ARTIST TALK 20 HRS, FREE ENTRANCE

ARTISTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND,
ALAIN DECLERCQ, FRANCE
AMAN MOJADIDI, USA
AYMAN YOSSRI DAYDBAN, SAUDI ARABIA/PALESTINE
ERIC ESMAILZADEH PARNES, USA/IRAN
IMRAN AHMAD KHAN, PAKISTAN
NERMINE HAMMAM, EGYPT
SHADI ALZAQZOUQ, PALESTINE/FRANCE
TAMMAM AZZAM, SYRIA
WAFAA BILAL, IRAQ/USA

Design : - Reza Abedini | 2015

Crisis of History Part 2: Fight History - Strategies of Resistance

Framer Framed presents the second chapter of the three-part series Crisis of History by curator Robert Kluijver. In the exhibition *Fight History - Strategies of Resistance* artists critically relate to historical images and narratives.

Shadi Alzaqzouq / Tammam Azzam Wafaa Bilal / Ayman Yossri Daydban Alain Declerq / Nermine Hammam Imran Ahmad Khan / Aman Mojadidi / Eric Parnes

The future has been stolen. The dreams that propelled the Arab world in the 20th century - pan Arab socialism, progressive Islam, nationalism and the struggle for self-determination - have floundered. Whatever remained of them has now been sacrificed on the altar of the post 9/11 'End of History'.

The artists participating in this exhibition seek to poke holes in the grand historical narrative. This narrative seems to relegate alternative ideals to 'the trap of history'. These artists resist the tendency to uniformity by proposing new cultural forms, mixing old and new, fiction and reality, 'East' and 'West' in surprising yet compelling ways.

The used strategies of resistance include creating alternative histories, role reversal and questioning the aesthetics of violence and militarization. The artists seek, stretch and ultimately fracture the boundaries of a discourse, which considers itself to be universal.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES
Shadi Alzaqzouq

Shadi Alzaqzouq is a Palestinian artist from Gaza, born in Benghazi (Libya) and residing in Paris since 2005. His paintings are intensely connected to his sociopolitical environment. While his work once vented his frustration at being one of many stateless and immobilized artists of Gaza, he now comments caustically on the clash of cultures he experiences around himself in Paris.

During the Arab Spring he started imagining what such a movement could look like in Paris and its suburbs, and put this into large-scale paintings. This series is called 'National Clothesline' as he imagined the national identities touted by the powers that be as dirty underwear hanging to dry. In the next series, 'Muslim Punk', the artist explores the complex identities he encounters in his immediate environment. In a seeming contradiction, the personalities combine radical contestation with deep spiritual feeling, and crass French popular culture with global Arab revolutionary élan.

Shadi Alzaqzouq
Rock Me All Night Long
Oil on Canvas, 2011

Shadi Alzaqzouq
Spring Clean Up
Oil on Canvas, 2012

Shadi Alzaqzouq
All We Need Is Hope
Oil on Canvas, 2012

Shadi Alzaqzouq
Me In 30 Years
Oil on Canvas, 2012

Shadi Alzaqzouq
After Washing #3
Oil on Canvas, 2015

Shadi Alzaqzouq
Helene Mohammed 2
Oil on Canvas, 2014

Shadi Alzaqzouq
Paris Calling
Oil on Canvas, 2014

Shadi Alzaqzouq.
All We Need is Hope.
Oil on Canvas, 2012.

Tammam Azzam

Tammam Azzam, born in Damascus in 1980, fled to Dubai with his wife and daughter in 2013. A painter by profession, the absence of a studio in exile encouraged him to experiment with digital art.

The Syrian Museum indirectly refers to the vast cultural wealth of this ancient nation, which is being destroyed in the civil war. By placing the icons of Western culture on the ruined landscapes of Syria, the artist asks what remains of the Western ideals of enlightenment and modernity, the same ideals which propelled Syria from the Ottoman period to Arab socialism.

His three flags - United Nations, United States and United Russia - show how each external power fighting the proxy war in Syria has carved out a territory for itself. The parties at war are appropriately symbolized by their weapon of predilection: a Kalashnikov for Russia, an M-16 for the USA and the sword of justice for the United Nations, whose flag strangely resembles that of fundamentalist Salafist groups. The name of each group is reproduced in Arabic using Koranic scripts, recalling their pretense to absolute truth, in the same way as religion.

Tammam Azzam
United Nations
Digital Print, 2013
First produced as flag 2015

Tammam Azzam
United States
First produced as flag 2015

Tammam Azzam
United Russia
Digital Print, 2013
First produced as flag 2015

Tammam Azzam
Freedom Graffiti (The Kiss)
Digital Print, 2013

Tammam Azzam
The Syrian Museum: Matisse, La Danse
Digital Print, 2013

Tammam Azzam
The Syrian Museum: Gauguin, Tahitian Women
Digital Print, 2013

Tammam Azzam
The Syrian Museum: Warhol, Elvis
Digital Print, 2013

Tammam Azzam
The Syrian Museum: Goya 3rd of May 1808
Digital Print, 2013

Tammam Azzam, Freedom Graffiti (The Kiss)

Wafaa Bilal

Wafaa Bilal, born in Iraq, fled the country in 1991. With his art he attempts to jolt the spectator out of his comfort zone, having focused for many years on the complacency of the US public in the bloodshed in his homeland. *'Virtual Jihadi'* is a computer game he made in 2008. The visitor is invited to enter the skin of the artist and shoot George W. Bush in this first-person shooter game.

Wafaa states the following about *Virtual Jihadi:* "In the widely marketed video game Quest for Saddam, players fight stereotypical Iraqi foes and try to kill Saddam Hussein. Al Qaeda did its own take, creating an online video game using the structure of *Quest for Saddam*, but adding a new "skin" to turn the game into a hunt for Bush: *The Night of Bush Capturing.* Bilal hacked the Al Qaeda version of the game to put his own nuanced spin on this epic conflict. In *The Night of Bush Capturing: A Virtual Jihadi,* Bilal casts himself as a suicide-bomber in the game. After learning of the real-life death of his brother in the war, he is recruited by Al Qaeda to join the hunt for Bush.

Virtual Jihadi is meant to bring attention to the vulnerability of Iraqi civilians to the travesties of the recent war, as well as their vulnerability to recruitment by violent groups such as Al Qaeda due to the US's failed strategy to secure Iraq. The work also aims to shed light on groups that traffic in crass and hateful stereotypes of Arab Culture with games like *Quest for Saddam* and other media."

The documentary film *Art not Terrorism* (22' 48") which runs on the same platform as the game, recounts how Virtual Jihadi was censored by the New York Art School, which was going to premiere it. The documentary describes how the powers that be, through a complex web of hypocrisies and double standards, not only banish the film but punish those who defend it under the banner of artistic freedom.

Wafaa Bilal
Virtual Jihadi
Computer Game, 2008

Wafaa Bilal
Art Not Terrorism
Documentary video, 22'48"
2008

Wafaa Bilal, Image from Virtual Jihadi

Ayman Yossri Daydban

Ayman Yossri Daydban, born a Palestinian in 1966, is a Saudi artist. One of the series he has developed continuously over the past decade are his *Subtitles*, which are screenshots he takes while watching TV in his parents' apartment, and then processes in different ways. Daydban uses the tension between the image, the Arabic subtitle and the context (early 21st century Saudi Arabia) to evoke emotions and thoughts which may be unspeakable, contradictory or downright comical.

In a recent performance the artist walked around Jeddah's corniche wearing a T-shirt with the words "I want to marry" printed on it. The Saudi women he loves will not marry him because of his status - their offspring would lose the coveted Saudi nationality with its benefits. His performance was thus partially a protest against a law; but it was also an expression of his solitude as an artist. At the same time it evokes the romantic spirit of amorous pursuit, which few non-Saudis will associate with this country. The corniche is one of the popular meeting points between unmarried Saudi men and women.

Ayman Yossri Daydban
I Want To Get Married
Documentation of a performance
Jeddah, 2012

Ayman Yossri Daydban
Subtitles series
Digital Prints, 2007-2014

Ayman Yossri Daydban, I Want To Get Married

Alain Declerq

Alain Declercq, born in Moulins, France in 1969, researches forms of oppression by the State, most notably by its security services, through his artistic practice. His investigations and occasional clashes with security, law and order forces have gotten him into trouble more than a few times.

The three works shown in Fight History show how the committed, politically conscious artist nowadays can easily be stamped as a threat to national security; in this regard the situation for the French artist is not fundamentally different than that of many Arab artists - in fact there is a need to react against the extreme security measures and the conformity they exact in most countries of the world.

Alain Declercq, B52

Alain Declercq
B52
Foto, 2003

Alain Declercq
Reconstitution de Perquisition
Selection from 120 prints, 2005

Alain Declercq
Mike
Video, 28'15"', 2005

Nermine Hammam

Nermine Hammam is an Egyptian artist born in Caïro in 1967. The works in the *Unfolding* series were made in the year following the fall of the Mubarak regime and represent attempts by the artist to deal with the pain and violence that surround her, and how such feelings can, or cannot, be relayed by mass media.

The images in the foreground have been sampled from the international media: some have become iconic. By transposing them onto delicate Oriental backgrounds (mostly 19th century Japanese prints) the artist brings them to life again. She states "The aesthetic distance [these backgrounds] provided, that of Japanese good manners and taste, allowed me to gaze at the minute horrors of military rule without feeling robbed of my humanity."

Nermine Hammam
A Leap In Faith
Digital Print on rice paper, 2012

Nermine Hammam
The Battle
Digital Print on rice paper, 2012

Nermine Hammam
Codes Of My Kin
Digital Print on rice paper, 2012

Nermine Hammam
The Hunt II
Digital Print on rice paper, 2012

Nermine Hammam, The Battle I, Digital photography, print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Rice Paper.
Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll.nr. TM-6481-2.
With thanks to the BankGiro Loterij

Imran Ahmad Khan

Imran Ahmad Khan's sculptures are inspired by the cacophony of Lahore. They conjure up both the city's tense present and its colonial past. The artist, who was born in Lahore in 1974 and grew up in an area of the city known for its traditional crafts and street industries, recycles found objects in his works as a commentary on the social and cultural fractures he experiences.

Muslim Zion (2014) combines a fan from the colonial era with a welded structure familiar in Pakistan's back alleys. The fan can no longer turn, as a promise unfulfilled, full of drive but blocked by its own structures. The title is derived from a recent book by the political philosopher Faisal Devji, in which he points out the similarities between the creation of Pakistan (1947) and Israel (1948) as countries whose identity was based not on a common history or sense of community, but on a religious ideal couched in progressive and universal terms.

Fire Expander (2015) is a commentary on the militarization of the response to any crisis, as if the only way to fight fire is with more firepower. The work was made specifically for this exhibition.

Imran Ahmad Khan
Muslim Zion
Installation, 2014

Imran Ahmad Khan
Fire Expander
Installation, 2015

Imran Ahmad Khan, Muslim Zion, Installation

Aman Mojadidi

Aman Mojadidi returned to Kabul after the fall of the Taliban (in 2003) to discover a motherland he had never visited. The country he found was, like him, in an open-ended process of redefining its identity. While contemporary Afghanistan is ever more marked by corruption, religious intolerance and violence, Aman uncovered the remarkable story of Zaman Mujaddidi, a 19th century ancestor who had been banished from Afghanistan because of his liberal ideals and settled in Fort Kochi, in southern India. There he had set up a humanist movement which is considered the precursor for both the non-violent independence struggle and Keralan communism, while establishing active trade networks with Afghanistan.

The first Biennale of Kochi (2012) gave Aman the opportunity to excavate the site of Zaman Mujaddidi's 'Humanist House' (Khanah-e Bashari in Persian). The results of the excavation were presented in a small site museum as the artist's contribution to the Biennale. These artifacts are displayed in this exhibition, along with 3D copies the artist made, to liberate antiquity from its material. A logbook in which the artist meticulously recorded his findings is presented alongside the objects, as well as information panels documenting the project.

Aman Mojadidi
The Humanity House
Installation, 2012-2015

*Aman Mojadidi, Khana e
Bashari Site office A*

Eric Parnes

"The prevalence of US unmanned aerial vehicles flying above the skies of the Middle East directly invokes the ancient myths of Babylonia. (…) The most famous flying God, Ishtar, represented both love and war. This work is based on the 2011 Iranian capture of a US military stealth drone in Kashmar near the Afghanistan border. After its controlled landing and public display, children's toys where manufactured based on the drone's unmistakable design and I have since arranged them into a classical Islamic geometric pattern."

Drones violate the sovereignty of countries, but also the right to privacy of their populations. By making it a 3D printable toy, the artist completes a convoluted cycle of rights violation and hacking, returning the drone to the people - bringing the night goddess back to earth.

The lethal nature of drones prompted the Dutch designer Ruben Pater to develop and freely offer online a 'Drone Survival Guide', translated in 32 languages. The reflective coating of the hanging version allows a person threatened by a drone to evade surveillance.

Eric Parnes
The Ishtar Machine
Installation with 3D printer,
wallpaper and printed drones
Made for Crisis of History, 2015

Eric Parnes, Ishtar

Ruben Pater

Drone Survival Guide

Twenty-First Century Birdwatching

Our ancestors could spot natural predators from far by their silhouettes. Are we equally aware of the predators in the present-day? The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) predicted in 2012 that within 20 years there could be as many as 30.000 drones flying over U.S. Soil alone. As robotic birds will become commonplace in the near future, we should be prepared to identify them. This survival guide is an attempt to familiarize ourselves and future generations, with a changing technological environment.

This document contains the silhouettes of the most common drone species used today and in the near future. Each indicating nationality and whether they are used for surveillance only or for deadly force. All drones are drawn in scale for size indication. From the smallest consumer drones measuring less than 1 meter, up to the Global Hawk with a length of 39,9 meter. The guide itself is printed on paper with a reflective metallic coating, so it can be used to reflect sunlight into the drone's camera system.

The mirrored material also reminds us that drone surveillance is ultimately people watching people. In a way we are looking at ourselves through sophisticated mirrors. The Drone Survival Guide is collected and translated as a form of civil initiative, not for profit and without government or commercial funding and/or support, for the sole purpose of making information available to the public.

On the website the guide can be downloaded and used for free. Readers of the site have supplied translations of the guide into 30 languages, all free to download. www.dronesurvivalguide.org

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Ruben Pater
Drone Survival Guide
Print, 2014

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OPENING HOURS
Wednesday to Sunday
14.00 - 22.00 hour

SIDE PROGRAM

**Every Tuesdaynight 20.00 hour
free admission**

10th of February
Artist talk with artists
Tammam Azzam and Shadi Alzaqzouq

17th of February
Film screening
'Image Acts' (2015)

24th of February
Event with the artists Kaya Behkalam
and Abla elBahrawy, moderated by
Katayoun Arian

3d of March
Syrious Mission, presentation

EXHIBITION
Collaboration of Framer Framed and
curator Robert Kluijver

Open from the 8th of February to the
8th of March 2015 at the Tolhuistuin
(IJpromenade 2, Amsterdam)

ROUTE
The Tolhuistuin can be reached from
Amsterdam Central Station with the
free ferry to the 'Buiksloterweg', by car
from the A10 road by taking exit S116.
The entrance to the Tolhuistuin Pavilion
is directly at the IJ.

INFORMATIN
www.framerframed.nl
www.crisisofhistory.nl

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