



University Art Gallery
712 Arts Plaza
Claire Trevor School of the Arts
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697-2775
(949) 824 9854
gallery@uci.edu
uag.arts.uci.edu

Tues.–Sat., 12–6PM

PRESS PREVIEW KIT

Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)

Curated by Juli Carson and
Yassmeen Tukan

Room Gallery

On View: October 5 – December 14, 2019

Opening Reception: October 5, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm



IRVINE, Calif. – UC Irvine’s University Art Galleries (UAG) Room Gallery is pleased to present *Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)* or *again, rubbed smooth, a moment in time__caesura*.

In [a] Gödel universe, it is provable that there exist closed time-like curves such that if you travel fast enough, you can, though always heading toward your local future, arrive in the past. These closed loops or circular paths have a more familiar name: *time travel*. But if it is possible in such worlds, as Gödel argues, to return to one’s past, then what was past never *passed* at all.

Palle Yourgrau, *A World without Time*, 2004

When we look out into the world and ask, “*Where* is art,” we are really pondering, “*When* is art?” For contemporary space is reciprocally – and inextricably – bound up with historical time. Such that, art is *always* in transit; not only in its various spatial adaptations throughout history, where we encounter it, but in its temporal apparitions, at once past, present and future. Quantum mechanics has a name for this phenomenon: *space-time*.

The subject of *Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)* – a film installation – features contemporary film essays produced by artists living and working in Beirut, a site where time bends and curves, as in a Gödel universe. Here, as elsewhere, historical events are what semioticians call a “sliding signifier,” an image-unit that floats between the past, present and future, then *back again* in one’s mind. Counter-intuitively, Beirut is also a city where particular events function as a kind of collective *caesura* – an historical blank space – within cultural consciousness. The most prominent of these events being the Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1991,

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which has (and continues) to provoke critically minded artists to engage in a type of *hermeneutic aesthetics* of past moments in time. For instance, artists of one generation, who were in primary school in the seventies, wrangle with screen memories of that moment, which can neither be completely remembered nor forgotten. Alternately, a younger generation of artists attempts to untangle that which they never knew themselves but which they have inherited as a gap in Lebanon's state sanctioned national history. But, already, this generational schema is a bit too tidy. For there are those artists in the region whose artwork critically investigate the more general question of memory, history and, therefore, *temporality*, by subtending the perspectival positions of the aforementioned generational lines. The film essays featured in *Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)*, showcase all three such perspectives.

Films by: Basma Alsharif, Panos Aprahamian, Mohamed Berro, Gregory Buchakjian and Valerie Cachard, Ali Cherri, Toni Geitani, Daniele Genadry, Amer Ghandour, Ahmad Ghossein, Ghassan Halwani, Mustapha Jundi, Nadim Mishlawi, Heather O'Brien, Raed and Rania Rafei, Walid Sadek, Ghassan Salhab, Mohamed Soueid, Rania Stephan, and Jalal Toufic.

Installation: A film program of 30 films screened over five days a week, for ten weeks. Each day's grouping – an essay of film-essays – ponders the imbricated questions: *When* in Time is Beirut? *Where* in Beirut is Time? *Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)* furthers the investigation made by the exhibition, entitled **again, rubbed smooth, a moment in time__caesura**, mounted at the American University of Beirut, Spring 2019. (Website: againrubbedsmooth.org)

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About the Curators:

Carson Bio:

Juli Carson is Professor of Art at UC Irvine where she teaches Critical and Curatorial Studies. She is also Philippe Jabre Professor of Art History and Curating at the American University of Beirut, 2018-19. Her books include: *Exile of the Imaginary: Politics, Aesthetics, Love* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2007) and *The Limits of Representation: Psychoanalysis and Critical Aesthetics* (Buenos Aires: Letra Viva Press, 2011). Her most recent book, *The Hermeneutic Impulse: Aesthetics of An Untethered Past*, was published by PoLyPen, a subsidiary of b_books Press.

Tukan Bio:

Yassmeen D. Tukan is a graduate student in History of Art and Curating at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Tukan's research interest is on Modern and Contemporary Art in the Arab World. During her graduate studies at the AUB, she worked at the AUB Art Galleries as a curatorial assistant and researcher. Tukan is a former student of Dr. Juli Carson who worked closely with her fellow students on the Beirut edition of this project titled ***again, rubbed smooth, a moment in time – caesura*** (2019). Prior to her studies, Tukan was a curatorial assistant at the Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF). She worked on three Biennial editions and numerous exhibitions for local, regional and international artists. In 2015, Tukan interned at the UAE National Pavilion for the Venice Biennial.



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Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)

Fact Sheet

Exhibition:

Exhibition Dates: October 5 – December 14, 2019
Curated by Juli Carson and Yassmeen Tukan

Events:

Opening Reception: October 5, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Room Gallery

Location:

Room Gallery
1200 Art Culture Technology, Irvine, CA 92697-2775

Description: “Beirut Lab: 1975(2020),” Curated by Juli Carson and Yassmeen Tukan, will screen films by artists living in Beirut, a city where time bends and curves, as historical events float between the past, present and future in one’s mind. “Beirut Lab” constitutes part two of “again, rubbed smooth, a moment in time – caesura,” an exhibition at the American University of Beirut, curated by Luna Arawi, Noëlle Buabbud, Juli Carson, Philippa Dahrouj, Amal Jaafar, Danielle Krikorian, Nour Maria El Helou, Karen Murad, Alex Sassine, Yassmeen Tukan, Maya Turk.

Curatorial Team: Luna Arawi, Noëlle Buabbud, Juli Carson, Philippa Dahrouj, Amal Jaafar, Danielle Krikorian, Nour Maria El Helou, Karen Murad, Alex Sassine, Yassmeen Tukan, Maya Turk

Gallery Hours:

Tues. – Sat. 12- 6 PM | Holiday closures: Nov. 28 – 29, 2018 | Free admission.

Parking:

UC Irvine [Mesa Parking Structure](#), 4000 Mesa Rd., Irvine, CA 92617

More Info:

<https://uag.arts.uci.edu/exhibit/beirut-lab-19752020>

Note to editors:

Selected high-resolution images for publicity only may be downloaded from
<http://www.arts.uci.edu/press-room/room-gallery-beirut-lab> (Key to images attached)

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PROGRAMMING

The place from which one speaks: A Conversation with Michelle Dizon & Heather M. O'Brien

Friday, October 11th, 2019

3:30-6 p.m. Room Gallery

www.michelledizon.com | www.heathermobrien.com

This dialogue will explore what it means to make image-based work about a place when the author is not understood to be from that place. How are understandings of “place” made and what subjective and historical registers urge artists to ground their practice in a politics of solidarity. Taking Dizon’s *Gaza Before the Law* (2018), shot in Los Angeles and Palestine, and O’Brien’s film, *dyad gaze* (2019), shot in Beirut, Lebanon as starting points, the artists will discuss the privilege of mobility, decolonial strategies for documentation, the legacy of images of war and domesticity, and Trinh T. Minh-ha’s idea of “speaking nearby.” O’Brien was a student of Dizon’s at CalArts from 2011-2013, in courses including “Visualities and the Alterglobal,” “The Work of War in Times of Art,” and “Feminism in Translation.”

When is Beirut? Symposium

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Humanities Gateway (HG 1010)

2 p.m.-6 p.m. Contemporary Arts Center (CAC 3201)

Speakers: TB

In collaboration with UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts, the School of Humanities’ emphasis in Global Middle Eastern Studies and UCI’s Illuminations initiative, *When is Beirut? Symposium* is a one-day event organized concurrently with, and in response to, UC Irvine’s Fall 2019 Room Gallery film installation program *Beirut Lab: 1975(2020)*. *When is Beirut? Symposium* will invite UC-wide theoreticians, emerging scholars, and film/video practitioners whose work and research engages with Lebanon to interrogate both the film essays and the theoretical propositions which subtend the works in the exhibition. *When is Beirut? Symposium* will furthermore invert the conventional model by which theoreticians discuss theories and artist/practitioners explicate artworks. In the symposium’s morning session, which will take place in the School of Humanities’ HG 1010, artists and film/video practitioners will be invited to challenge, and extend, the exhibition’s theoretical propositions. In the afternoon session, which will take place adjacent to the Room Gallery in the University’s Contemporary Arts Center Colloquium facility (CAC 3201), theoreticians and scholars will be asked to engage with the works on view in the film installation. Through paper presentations and panel discussions, theoreticians and practitioners will meet to confront multiple, simultaneous and divergent perspectives on the political, theoretical, and aesthetic consequences of the Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1991.

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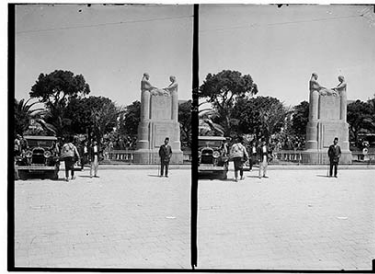
PRESS PREVIEW KIT IMAGE KEY

Room Gallery, Claire Trevor School of the Arts

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Curated by Juli Carson and Yassmeen Tukan

Press Images:



(1)



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Photo credit: (1) Stereographic picture of Martyrs' Monument, by Youssef El-Howayyek, in Beirut El-Burj Square, circa 1930. (2) Rania and Raed Rafei, *74 (The reconstitution of a struggle)*, 2012, film still. © Orjouane Productions. (3-5) *caesura - a moment in time, again, rubbed smooth*, 2019, installation view, American University of Beirut.

The images are approved only for publication in conjunction with promotion of the exhibition. Reproductions must include the full caption information, and images may not be cropped or altered in any way or superimposed with any printing.

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About the UAG

The University Art Galleries are committed to promoting an inter-generational dialogue between 60s/70s neo-avant-garde art and contemporary visual culture. Accordingly, the curatorial mission is to keep an eye on the modernist past while promoting the most innovative aesthetic and political debates of the post-modern present. From this vantage, the projects commissioned provoke intelligent debate on the subject of art in its most expansive poetic definition. What distinguishes the program is its unwavering commitment to publishing scholarly texts in catalogue/book form in order to disseminate research-based information into the community, providing a venue for the promotion of innovative discourse surrounding mixed media production today. The UAG program provides several exhibition platforms for inter-generational and interdisciplinary dialogue. The Major Works of Art Series commissions original projects by canonical artists working today. The Emerging Artist Series features solo projects by a set of younger artists informed by the legacies showcased in the Major Works series. The Critical Aesthetics Program commissions new work by internationally renowned mid-career artists. Augmenting this inter-generational dialogue, UAG also produces larger thematic group exhibitions alternately showcasing historical and contemporary art and film projects. UAG further promotes an active dialogue between UCI residents and the local and international art communities through colloquia, conferences, visiting artist lectures and theme-based films series, all of which are open to the public. As the galleries continue to mature, they stand committed to being an experimental exhibition space different from the current - but largely traditional - art biennial and film festival platforms.

About UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts

As UCI's creative laboratory, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts explores and presents the arts as the essence of human experience and expression, through art forms ranging from the most traditional to the radically new. The international faculty works across a wide variety of disciplines, partnering with others across the campus. National-ranked programs in art, dance, drama, and music begin with training but end in original invention. Students come to UCI to learn to be citizen-artists, to sharpen their skills and talents, and to become the molders and leaders of world culture. For more information, please visit www.arts.uci.edu.