

The word 'MRO' is rendered in a thick, purple, hand-drawn outline style. The letters are set against a background of a fine, light gray dot grid. The 'M' is on the left, the 'R' is in the middle, and the 'O' is on the right. The outlines are slightly irregular, giving it a sketchy, artistic feel.

MRO

Meeting Points

Contemporary Art Festival from the Arab World
Locus Agonistes: Practices and Logics of the Civic

Curated by Okwui Enwezor



BIOGRAPHIES

Omar Abusaada

Since his graduation from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus, Omar Abusaada has worked as a dramaturge for several productions. Before he start his career as director when he established The Studio Theatre Company along with other fellow Syrian theatre practitioners; with whom he achieved a numerous interactive theatre projects taking place in rural areas. In 2004, Abusaada presented his first play as director *Insomnia*, which was

performed in Contact Theatre Festival, Manchester. Followed by the second production *Poster in 2006*; *Samah* in 2008, a collective improvisation performance with a group of young prisoners from Damascus Juvenile Institute. And *Al Merwad wa Al Mekhala* in 2009 at the Syrian Opera House. Abusaada is the author of several plays and scripts; he also organized and supervised several theatrical workshops.

Mohammad Al Attar

Playwright, dramaturge and drama practitioner. A graduate in English Literature Faculty - Damascus University (2002) and Theatrical Studies Faculty - the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts (2002), Al Attar also received MA degree in Applied Drama from Goldsmiths College, University of London (2010), with focus on the 'Political and Social Role of Theatre'. In 2006 Al Attar joined the Studio Theatre Company in Damascus, participating in several interactive projects in rural areas; and he was the dramaturge of some of the company's plays including *Samah* (2008), a collective improvisation performance with group of young prisoners from Damascus Juvenile Institute. Al Attar worked as a *dramaturge* for many productions, *Al Merwad Wa Al Mekhala* directed by

Omar Abusaada. Henrik Ibsen's *The Enemy of the People* directed by Yaser Abedllatif . Al Attar also wrote the text for the street performance *Sandouk Al Kar* directed by Bissan Al-Sharif. His play *Withdrawal*, was published in English and Arabic, and was adapted for performances and readings in: London, New York, New Delhi, Berlin, Tunisia and Beirut. His play *Online* was premiered at Royal Court Theatre - London, as part of the rehearsed readings event *After the Arab Spring*. Al Attar career as a writer includes several unpublished texts and numerous critical contributions published in many magazines and newspapers.

Omar Amiralay

The eruption of the 1968 student's revolt in Paris was a turning point in the career of late Syrian filmmaker Omar Amiralay, who at that time was enrolled at the Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques (currently known as FEMIS). His involvement in the revolt and the act of documentation that he undertook as the incidents broke through made him drop his studies and begin making films that would become part of the canon for generations of documentary filmmakers in the Arab world.

Amiralay's filmography includes about twenty of the most important documentaries covering crucial cultural, political and social issues, and are considered essential chapters in the modern history of Syria, the region and beyond. His films include masterpieces like: *Film Essay on the Euphrates Dam* (1970), *Everyday Life in a Syrian Village* (1974), *On a Revolution* (1978); *Love*

Aborted (1983); *For the Attention of Madame the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto* (1990); *Light and Shadows* (1994); *On a Day of Ordinary Violence, My Friend Michel Seurat* (1996); *The Man with the Golden Soles* (1999).

Driving force in the establishment of the Arab Film Institute (2005-2008), Amiralay received several international awards from the early stages of this career, among other recognitions like the 2006 retrospective of his work at Centre Georges Pompidou's Cinema du Réel festival in Paris.

At the time of his death on February 5th 2011, Amiralay was working on his new film, *Seduction*.

Tarek Atoui

Born in Beirut, Tarek Atoui moved to France in 1998, where he studied contemporary and electronic music at the French National Conservatory of Reims. Drawing his inspiration from social and political realities, he soon established himself as one of the pioneers of an upcoming generation of Arab artists experimenting in the fields of electronic music and digital arts.

In 2008, he was co-artistic director of the STEJM Studios in Amsterdam, and released his first solo album under the label Staalplaat (Amsterdam/Berlin). He has also initiated and curated several multidisciplinary interventions, events, concerts and workshops in Europe and the Middle East.

Atoui is known for building new software for each project he works on, as well as creating innovative computer tools for interdisciplinary art forms and youth

education, such as the workshop *Empty Cans* that he presented in France, Holland, Lebanon, Egypt and New York.

His recent productions and performances took place at many contemporary art events and festivals including: Today's Art Festival, The Hague; Sharjah Biennale, UAE; the New Museum, New York; La Maison Rouge, Paris; Mediacity, Seoul; and he is currently an artist in residence at the Sharjah Art Foundation that has been closely following his work since 2008.

Tony Chakar

Tony Chakar is a Beirut architect and writer whose work includes several collaborations with the leading contemporary arts association, Ashkal Alwan: *Chimerical City*, 1999; *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, 2000; *Four Cotton Underwear for Tony*, 2001; *The Eyeless Map*, 2003; *A Window to the World*, 2005; and *The Sky Over Beirut – Walking Tours of the City*, 2009.

Outside Lebanon, Chakar exhibited his work in the region and beyond: Townhouse Gallery Cairo; *Contemporary Arab Representations* curated by Catherine David and presented in several European cities; Sharjah Biennale, Sao Paulo Biennale and Venice Biennale; Royal College of Art and ICA, London...

Furthermore, Chakar's art projects and multidisciplinary performances have benefited from several partnerships with other fellow innovative and progressive artists such as Naji Assi, *Rouwaysset, a Modern Vernacular*, 2001; Walid Raad and Bilal Khbeiz, *My neck is Thinner than a Hair*, 2004; Rabih Mroué and Tiago Rodrigues, *Yesterday's Man*, 2007. Tony Chakar also regularly contributes to European art magazines, and teaches History of Art and History of Architecture at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux arts (ALBA), Balamand University.

Hafiz Dhaou & Aïcha M'Barek

Aïcha M'Barek and Hafiz Dhaou are essential figures of the Tunisian contemporary dance scene. Both trained at the Sybel Ballet Theatre in their homeland, they moved to France in the year 2000, where they pursued their training at Angers' CNCD. Four years later, they presented their first performance as a duo, *Khallini Aïch*.

In 2005, they founded the Company Chatha and created the duo *Les Cartes postales Chorégraphiques* in the framework of the project *L'Art de la rencontre*, conceived by Dominique Hervieu; followed the next year by the quartet *Khaddem Hazem*, presented in Lyon Dance Biennale. Since then, they have been inventing their common choreographic language, not without highlighting their duality.

M'Barek and Dhaou's creations also include: Vu quintet, Lyon Dance Biennale, 2008; *Kawa, un solo à deux*, 2010; *Un des sens*, a choreography for 30 dancers, The Ballets of Lorraine and CCN Nancy, 2011... In addition to their association to the 10th and 11th editions of the Dance Festival—The Choreographic Meetings of Carthage, in 2011 and 2012.

Since their establishment as innovative contemporary dance figures practicing their own unique style and sense of choreographic phrasing, M'Barek and Dhaou have been performing all over the region, Africa, Europe and North America.

Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige

Born in Beirut, Hadjithomas and Joreige are filmmakers, artists and university teachers. Together, they have created numerous photographic installations and videos such as the *Wonder Beirut* project, *The Circle of Confusion*, *Lasting Images* shown in several museums and galleries around the world. They have also directed feature films: *Around the Pink House* and *A Perfect Day*; short films: *Ashes* and *Open the Door Please*; and documentaries: *Khiam*

2000-2007 and *The Lost Film*. Their films have been very enthusiastically received, presented in many international festivals, released in several countries, and won many awards. Their feature film *I Want to See/Je veux voir*, starring Catherine Deneuve and Rabih Mroué premiered at the Cannes film Festival and received the award of Best Singular Film of the year 2008 by the French Syndicate of Cinema Critics.

Mona Hatoum

Mona Hatoum first became widely known in the mid 1980s for a series of performances and videos works that focused with great intensity on the body. In the 1990s her work moved towards large-scale installations and sculpture.

She was born into a Palestinian family in Beirut and now lives in London and Berlin. She has participated in numerous important exhibitions including the

Turner Prize, Venice Biennale, Documenta XI and the Biennale of Sydney. Solo exhibitions include Centre Pompidou, Tate Britain, Hamburger Kunsthalle, MCA Sydney and Palazzo Querini Stampalia in the context of the 53rd Venice Biennale.

Samah Hijawi

Cross-disciplinary visual artist experimenting through video, performance and interventions, Samah Hijawi's recent pieces (Narratives for Arts History of Jordan, *Where are the Arabs*, *The Gas Car Project*...) focus on investigating public spaces and interacting with the audience. Hijawi received a BA from the Lebanese American University, Lebanon (1999) and an MA from Central Saint Martin School of Art and Design, London (2005). Hijawi's work has been exhibited in Jordan, Scotland, France, The Netherlands, Dubai, Greece and the United-Kingdom.

Hijawi is also a cultural activist collaborating with several local independent visual arts projects. With Makan Art Space, Amman she has organized a

series of workshops targeting youths, while continuing research on the development of the arts in Jordan and the influence of regional migration on local creation, as a result of war and occupation in Palestine and Iraq. Her writing and lectures have been published in both local and international publications.

The Sexual Physiology of Hermaphrodites is Hijawi's second participation in Meeting Points. In 2007, she presented the public intervention *Disorientation* in Meeting Points 5. She was a co-curator of *Unclassified – Amman*.

Fadhel Jaïbi and Jalila Baccar

Fadhel Jaïbi (director) and Jalila Baccar (author and actress) create an engaging play of flesh and blood, of movement and emotion, communicating a direct and convulsive energy to their performances. They question the condition of contemporary homo tunisianus, as expressed in multiple languages (prose or poetry that alternate between three distinct linguistic levels: literary Arabic, Bedouin, and urban Tunisian dialect), and as it is created from a complex, fragmented history that is often ignored and repressed.

Fadhel Jaïbi is a major figure in Arabic language theater. He founded with Jalila Baccar the first private Tunisian theater le Nouveau Théâtre de Tunis in 1976.

In 1993, they founded Familia Productions, their theater company.

Since 1972, after twenty productions and three films, he has forged a unique status in Tunisia, which guarantees him independence as well as freedom of speech and creativity, allowing him to work without having to negotiate with either the authorities or the market.

In 2002, Junun (Dementias) was honored at the Festival of Avignon.

Selma & Sofiane Ouissi

in collaboration with Yacine Sebti

Brother and sister, Sofiane and Selma Ouissi have been performing together since the beginning of their careers. Graduates of the Tunis National Academy for Music and Dance and the Dance National Center of Tunis, and holders of the Diplôme d'Etat d'Enseignement de la Danse (France), they are considered as main figures of the Arab contemporary dance scene.

The duo has performed with major Tunisian and international theater directors and choreographers (Fadhel Jaziri, Hichem Rostom, Martino Muller, Cie de Michèle Anne de Mey...) in world class venues and performing arts platforms (Théâtre de la Ville de Paris, Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Tanzquartier Wien, Danse à Aix, Bouffes du Nord in Paris, Festival de Carthage). Their own creations include *STOP... BOOM* (2004) and *Waçl* (2007), among other performances and have been staged across the region and Europe.

In 2007, Selma and Sofiane Ouissi created *Dream City*, a multidisciplinary festival in Tunis. In 2010 they launched the artistic and urban magazine ZAT, among other cultural projects and pedagogical activities in the fields of movement, dance and new circus.

Software, digital and video artist Yacine Sebti has been developing programs and software using Max/MSP, Jitter or SoftVNS.... since an early age. First aiming to create useful tools, he gradually showed growing interest in the possibilities of interaction between the performer, the spectator and the machine.

Artistic collaborations include: Marcio Ambrosio (animator), Pascal Base (experimental filmmaker), Tom Heene (video artist), Jaouad Essounani (theatre director).

Adania Shibli

Adania Shibli, born in Palestine, has published short stories and essays in such literary magazines as Ramallah's *Al-Karmel*, the Beirut literary periodicals *Al-Adaab* and *Zawayya*, and Alexandria's *Amkenah*. Many of these pieces have been translated into French, German, Italian, Hebrew, Korean, and English.

Her play *The Error* has been staged at the Tristan Bates Theatre, London, and at the New World Theater in *Amherst*, Massachusetts. Shibli is currently living in Berlin where she has a postdoctoral fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

Ahdaf Soueif

Ahdaf Soueif is the author of the bestselling *The Map of Love*, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1999. Ms. Soueif is also a political and cultural commentator. A collection of her essays, *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground*, was published in 2004. Her translation (from

Arabic into English) of Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah* also came out in 2004. She lives with her children in London and Cairo.

Laila Soliman

Laila Soliman is an independent Egyptian theatre director and playwright, living and working in Cairo. She studied at the American University in Cairo and now she is doing her MA in Theater at Dasarts in Amsterdam.

Soliman's work has at its roots a belief in the role of theatre and art as tools for empowering the individual and aiding personal expression

Her works have been shown in Egypt and in Europe.

Amongst her most important works are *The Retreating World* (2004), *Ghorba, images of alienation* (2006), *...At your service!* (2009), *Spring Awakening in the Tuktuk* (2010), *Lessons in Revolting* (2011).

She also worked as a dramaturge on the documentary theatre piece *Radio Muezzin* by Stefan Kaegi (Rimini Protokoll), which is touring internationally since 2008.

Her play *Egyptian Products* (2009) was published in the anthology *Plays from the Arab World* by Nick Hern Books and the *Royal Court Theatre*, London.

Currently she is working on a documentary theatre series on military and police violence called *No Time for art*.

Okwui Enwezor

Okwui Enwezor is a curator, writer, and critic. Recently appointed Director of Haus der Kunst in Munich, a position he will assume in October, 2011, Enwezor's wide ranging practice spans the world of international exhibitions, museums, academia, and publishing. He is currently a Joanne Cassulo Fellow at Whitney Independent Study Program, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Artistic Director of La Triennale 2012, Paris; and Adjunct Curator at International Center of Photography, New York. He is the founder and editor of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* published by Duke University Press.

Enwezor has held academic appointments as Dean of Academic Affairs and Senior Vice President at San Francisco Art Institute (2005-2009); Visiting Professor in the Department of Art History and Architecture at University of Pittsburgh and University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and Visiting Professor at the Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University, New York. In the Spring of 2012, he will serve as Kirk Varnedoe Visiting Professor at Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Amongst his numerous curatorial credits, he was Artistic Director 2nd Johannesburg Biennale (1996-1998), Artistic Director of Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany (1998-2002), Artistic Director of 2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Seville, Spain (2005-2007), and Artistic Director of 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008). His many exhibitions include *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994*, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich; Century City, Tate Modern, London; *Mirror's Edge*, Bildmuseet, Umea; *In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940-Present*, Guggenheim Museum; *Global Conceptualism*, Queens Museum, New York; *David Goldblatt: Fifty One Years*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; *Stan Douglas: Le Detroit*, Art Institute of Chicago; *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary*

African Photography, International Center of Photography, New York; *The Unhomely: Phantom Scenes in Global Society*, Centro Andalucia de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville, and *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, at International Center of Photography, New York. He is also completing work on several projects including: *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid and Sun in their Eyes: Photography and the Invention of Africa, 1839-1939*, both for International Center of Photography; and *1979-1989: Art and Culture Between Revolutions*.

His recent publications include: *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (Steidl and ICP, 2008), *Contemporary African Art Since 1980* (Damiani Editore, 2009) with Chika Okeke-Agulu, and co-editor with Terry Smith and Nancy Condee of *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*: (Duke University Press, 2008). His forthcoming books include *James Casebere: Works, 1975-2010*, a monograph on the work of the American artist; and *Archaeology of the Present: The Postcolonial Archive, Photography, and African Modernity*, which will be published in 2012.

Enwezor is a recipient several awards and honors for his work as a curator, critic, and editor, including the Peter Norton Foundation Curatorial Award (1998); Paul Mellon Distinguished Fellow at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2000), the Agnes Gund Curatorial Award (2007), Bard College Award for Curatorial Excellence (2009); Deutscher Fotobuch Preis (2006). In 2006, he was honored by the College Art Association with Frank Jewett Mather Award for Distinction in Criticism.