

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.

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## 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*.

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## 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.

## Akeel Bilgrami

Akeel Bilgrami is Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University and faculty member of the Committee on Global Thought. He has two relatively independent sets of intellectual interests: the philosophy of mind and language, and political philosophy and moral psychology, especially as they

surface in politics, history, and culture. His collection of essays, *Politics and The Moral Psychology of Identity* is forthcoming in 2012 from Harvard University Press. He is presently working on a book on the relations between agency and practical reason.

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## 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.

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## Radhouane El Meddeb

Graduate of the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Tunis and trained as a dancer with Jean-Laurent Saspotès and Lisa Nelson, Radhouane El Meddeb has performed with acclaimed Tunisian and French theatre directors, such as: Fadhel Jaïbi, Taoufik Jebali, Mohamed Driss, Jacques Rosner, Lotfi Achour and Catherine Boskowitz.

In 2005, after several collaborations with fellow choreographers, he performed his first solo piece: *Pour en finir avec MOI*; followed by *Hûwâ, Ce lui* which premiered in Montpellier Danse 2006.

In 2008, he created *Quelqu'un va danser...* for the International Chorographical Meetings of Seine-Saint-Denis, France. During the same year, the Burkinabe choreographer Salia Sanou invited him for a "carte blanche" among the

activities of the CND - *Sonorités et corps d'Afrique*, where he designed the culinary and dance performance: *Je danse et vous en donne à bouffer*. In 2010, El Meddeb created his first group performance *Ce que nous sommes*, in the Pantin's National Dance Centre, France. and a duo *Chant d'Amour* after the work of Jean Genet.

Since 2011, he became an associated artist to 104 – CENTQUATRE in Paris, where he collaborated with Philippe Adan on the occasion of the festival Concordan(s)e to create *A l'étroit*, a face-à-face between an author and a choreographer.

## Oussama Ghanam

Oussama Ghanam is a dramaturge and director. Graduate of the Damascus Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts, Ghanam completed his doctoral degree at the University of Vincennes-St Denis, Paris 8 – on the work of Michel Vinaver, while his graduate work focused on Edward Bond, Sa'adallah Wannus, Peter Brook and Antoine Vitez.

He was the curator of the international theatre and dance program of Damascus Arab Capital of Culture 2008 in which he also participated as a dramaturge with the highly acclaimed adaptation of Mrozek's play *The Emigrants*, directed by Samer Omran.

In 2009, Damascus Opera House presented Ghanam's first play as a director in an adaptation of *Krapp's last tape* by Samuel Beckett. Following his directorial debut was the launch of Damascus Theatre Laboratory, a platform dedicated to research and creation. In 2010 Ghanam presented his second play *It happened tomorrow* based on texts by Kroetz, Ravenhill and Fo.

Since his return to Syria in 2006, Ghanam has been teaching contemporary theatre in the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts, along with his numerous activities aiming at the development of performing arts practices in the country.

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## 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.

## David Hare

Leader of a generation of British dramatists who came to fore in the 70s, writer and director David Hare is closely linked the Royal Court Theatre in which he was Literary Manager and Resident Dramatist from 1969 to 1971, in addition to having written several plays premiered in this emblematic venue, such as: *The Vertical Hour*, *My Zinc Bed*, *Teeth 'n' Smiles*, and *Slag*.

Hare's repertoire also features: *Gethsemane*, *Plenty*, *Pravda* (written with Howard Brenton), *Racing Demon*, *Murmuring Judges*, *The Absence of War*, *Skylight*, *Amy's View*, *The Permanent Way* and *Stuff Happens*. As a screenwriter, he wrote the scripts of widely acclaimed films by both the critics and the audience, such as *The Reader* and *The Hours*.

During his on-going highly prolific and praised career, Hare received some of the most prestigious awards given in the fields of cinema and theatre: BAFTA (1979), the New York Critics Circle Award (1983), the Berlin Film Festival Golden Bear (1985), the Olivier Award (1990), and the London Theatre Critics' Award (1990). Moreover, the French government honored him as an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 1997, a year before he was knighted by the British government for the services he made to the art of theatre.

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## Mona Hatoum

In 1975, multidisciplinary artist of Palestinian origin, Mona Hatoum was forced into exile when the Lebanese civil war broke during one of her visits to London, where she stayed, training at both the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art, University College.

Hatoum's work revolves around the body, politics, gender issues, the concept of space, and the physical interaction with the viewer/spectator. Her work – in which she often used her own body as a medium is an attempt to create both sensual and intellectual experiences dealing with the themes of exile,

displacement, the sense of loss and separation caused by war, and the relation between the Third World and the West.

Since 1983, Hatoum has been displaying her installations and performance videos on solo and group exhibitions all around the world, including: Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Britain, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; MoMA, New York; Darat Al Funun, Jordan; Venice Biennale, Italy; Documenta XI, Germany; and the XXIV Bienal de Sao Paulo, Brazil...



## 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*.

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## Rahel Jaeggi

Rahel Jaeggi is a professor of practical philosophy with a focus on social philosophy and the philosophy of law at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

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## Sandra Madi

Amman-based film director and actress of Palestinian origin, Sandra Madi has performed in about 20 plays presented all across the Arab world and Europe.

Graduate of the Arab Institute of Film (2006), Madi has taught in several youth acting and improvisation workshops.

Madi has as an actress received three major awards. She is also a television director and producer, as well as a local radio host.

## Chantal Mouffe

Chantal Mouffe is a professor of political theory at the University of Westminster. She has held research positions at Harvard, Cornell, the University of California, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris. Her latest book is *On the Political*, published

by Routledge in 2005. She is currently elaborating a non-rationalist approach to political theory; formulating an "agonistic" model of democracy. She is also engaged in research projects on the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and the place of Europe in a multipolar world order.

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## Orwa Nyrabia

Orwa graduated from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus and worked as a columnist at Assafeer Newspaper before he started in film where he worked as Assistant Director in high-profile fiction films such as *Sacrifices* by Oussama Mohammad (Certain Regard – Cannes 2002) and played as lead actor in *La Porte du soleil* of Yousri Nassrallah (Selection Officielle – Cannes 2004). Since he co-founded Proaction Film, Orwa worked in a number of documentary and fiction films before he started producing.

Today Orwa continues to produce and co-produce documentary and fiction films and is working on two in-development projects.

As a filmmaker, Orwa made one short documentary, co-directing a short fiction and finishing his feature-length doc *Queen of Hearts*.

Orwa is a co-founder, organizer and head of programming of Dox Box International Documentary Film Festival in Syria.

## 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).

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## Rasha Salti

Rasha Salti is an independent film and visual arts curator and writer, living in Beirut, Lebanon. She co-curated *The Road to Damascus*, with Richard Peña, a retrospective of Syrian cinema that toured worldwide (2006), and *Mapping Subjectivity: Experimentation in Arab Cinema from the 1960s until Now*, with Jytte Jensen (2010-2012) showcased at the MoMA in New York. In 2011, she joined the team of programmers of the Toronto International Film Festival.

Salti has administered a number of events, including a tribute to Edward Said titled *For a Critical Culture* (Beirut, 1997), and 50, *Nakba and Resistance* (Beirut, 1998), a three months long cultural season for the fiftieth commemoration of the tragedy of Palestine, and co-organized *Waiting for the Barbarians: A Tribute to Edward Said* (Istanbul, 2007) in collaboration with Metis Press and Bogazici

University. In 2011, she was one of co-curators of the 10th edition of the *Sharjah Biennial for the Arts*, with Suzanne Cotter and Haig Aivazian.

Salti writes about artistic practice in the Arab world, film, and general social and political commentary, in Arabic and English. Her articles and essays have been published in *The Jerusalem Quarterly Report* (Palestine), *The London Review of Books* (UK), *Afterall* (US) and *Third Text* (UK), to cite a few. In 2006, she edited *Insights into Syrian Cinema: Essays and Conversations with Filmmakers* (ArteEast and Rattapallax Press).

## Samah Selim

Samah Selim is Assistant Professor in the Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures at Rutgers University, New Jersey.

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## 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 *Zawaya*, 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.

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## 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.

## 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.