

Ali Cherri

Portfolio

Imane Farès

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Works: Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris

Ali Cherri

Lives and works in Paris and Beirut.



Photo: The National Gallery

Ali Cherri's work is inspired by artefacts and the natural world. His sculptures, drawings and installations explore the temporal shifts between ancient worlds and contemporary societies. Using archaeological artefacts as a starting point, he investigates the boundaries of ideologies that underpin the foundations of nations and the myth of national progression. His work explores the links between archaeology, historical narrative and heritage, considering the processes of excavation and relocation of cultural objects into museums.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Dreamless Night* (GAMEC, 2023), *Humble and quiet and soothing as mud* (Swiss Institute, 2023), *Ceux qui nous regardent* (CAC La Traverse, 2023), *If you prick us, do we not bleed?* (National Gallery, 2022), *Return of the Beast* (Imane Farès, 2021), *Tales from the Riverbed* (Clark House, 2018), *From Fragment to Whole* (Jönköping County Museum, 2018), *Satellite 10: Somniculus Programme* (CAPC Centre d'art contemporain de Bordeaux and Jeu de Paume, 2017), *A Taxonomy of Fallacies: The Life of Dead Objects* (Sursock Museum, 2016).

His work has recently been exhibited at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (Valencia), Jameel Arts Center (Dubai), Para Site (Hong Kong), MAXXI (Rome), Centre Pompidou (Paris), the 15th Sharjah Biennial (2023), the 5th Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India, 2022), the Venice Biennial (2022), Manifesta 13 (Marseille, 2020), the 5th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art (Ekaterinburg, 2019), the 8th Melle International Biennial of Contemporary Art (Melle, 2018), and the 13th Sharjah Biennial (2017).

He received the Robert E. Fulton Fellowship from Harvard University (2016), the Rockefeller Foundation Prize (2017), and was nominated for the Abraaj Group Art Prize (2018). In 2022, he received the Silver Lion for his participation in the Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition, *The Milk of Dreams*.

His work is included in many leading collections: National Gallery (London), British Museum (London), Art Jameel (Dubai), Centre Pompidou (Paris), MACBA (Barcelona), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Sharjah Art Foundation, Sursock Museum (Beirut).

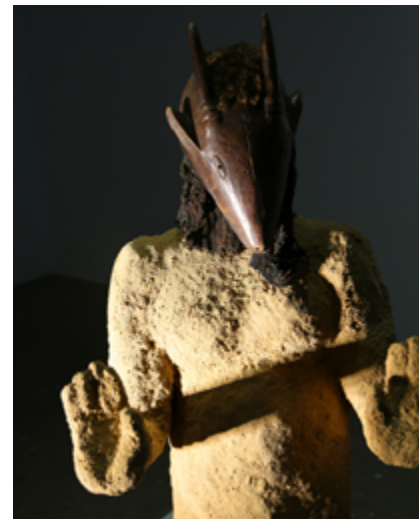
*Humble and quiet and soothing as
mud*

cur. Stefanie Hessler & Alison
Coplan
Swiss Institute, New York
September 2023 – January 2024

The Dreamer;
Leaning Figure;
Gilgamesh (The Death of Enkidu);
Standing Figure (Pow!)
2023

Photos: Ali Cherri.

From ancient Sumerian mythology to Jewish folklore, Maori and Chinese creation myths to Hindu and Yoruba cosmogony, humankind has time and again been narrativized as originating from mud. Houses, pots, and other vessels made from clay were instrumental to the beginnings of societies, as they were used for cooking, heating and gathering food. It is from the aqueous solution covering the Earth, where water and soil met, that the first single-celled organisms emerged, birthing every living creature on Earth today.



The Dreamer

2023

Iron-cast mask, wood, xps, clay, sand,
pigments
Unique



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Leaning Figure

2023

Zoomorphic stone head; iron, xps, clay,
sand, pigments

Unique



Gilgamesh (The Death of Enkidu)

2023

Old wooden mask; iron, xps, clay, sand,
pigments / Bull horns, iron, clay, sand,
pigments

Unique



Gilgamesh (The Death of Enkidu)

2023

Old wooden mask; iron, xps, clay, sand,
pigments / Bull horns, iron, clay, sand,
pigments

Unique



Standing Figure (Pow!)

2023

Animal mask, iron, xps, clay, sand, pigments

Unique



In Our Veins Flow Ink and Fire
curated by Shubigi Rao
5th Kochi-Muziris Biennale
December 2022 – April 2023

Seated Figure;
Lion;
Standing Figure;
2022

Ali Cherri's participation in the 5th
International Art Exhibition of Kochi-
Muziris Biennale.

Photos: Ali Cherri.

In continuity with the project presented at
the Venice Biennale, Ali Cherri uses mud
both as a material and as a metaphor to
create three new sculptures presented
for the first time at the Kochi-Muziris
Biennale.

Mud is a symbolic element in nearly
all creation myths. As the artist says:
"Whether it is Gilgamesh, Golems or Adam,
they are all moulded from mud. So, this
material is as old as humanity itself and
has a history that's cyclical."



Seated Figure

2022

Heaume mask Mapico (Tanzania), clay,
sand, xps, wood, pigments

130 x 85 x 67 cm

Unique



Lion

2022

Pink Sandstone of a roaring lion head
sculpture (England, 16th century), clay,
sand, xps, wood, pigments

52 x 105 x 45 cm

Unique



Standing Figure

2022

Terracotta Nok head (Nigeria, c. 500 B.C.),

clay, sand, xps, wood, pigments

88 x 25 x 40 cm

Unique



Seated Simia

2023

Gurunsi Monkey Mask, first half of the
20th century, (Burkina Faso), clay sand,
xps, pigments
78 x 78 x 78 cm
Unique



Vermilingua Bust

2023

Vakono Monkey Mask, first half of the 20th
century, (Nigeria), clay sand, xps, pigments

106 x 78 x 48 cm

Unique



La Grande Dame

2023

Male head with ball headdress (Egypt,
Late Period, ca. 664-32 B.C.), clay, sand,
pigments, xps, steel
50 x 12 x 8 cm
Unique



The Milk of Dreams
curated by Cecilia Alemani
59th International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia
April - Nov. 2022

Titan 1, 2 & 3
2022

Ali Cherri's participation in the 59th
International Art Exhibition of La Biennale
di Venezia

Photos: Ali Cherri.

These three new sculptures are titled *Titans* and made of earth, water and their mixture: mud. Mud functions as the raw material for construction, but also as a metaphor. Deeply embedded in narratives of creation, from Gilgamesh to the Golems and Adam's formation, mud grounds life in a cycle that always finds its way back into the earth. Bearing resemblance to mud creatures or Lamassu, the three sculptures are evocative of mythological creatures.



Titan 1

2022

Terracotta Nok head (Nigeria, c. 2100 B.C.),

clay, sand, loam, gesso, pencil, pigments

180 x 75 x 50 cm

Unique

Coll. Guggenheim Abu Dhabi



Titan 2

2022

Front part of a Mayan cult vase modeled after a priest wearing a mouth mask evoking the Monkey God Hun Batz or Hun Chouen, terracotta with smoothed orange engobe (Classical period, 600-900 AD), clay, sand, loam, gesso, pencil, pigments

198 x 70 x 50 cm

Unique

Coll. Famille Servais



Titan 3

2022

Mayan head of a dignitary in orange-beige terracotta (Mexico or Guatemala, Classical period, 600-900 AD), clay, sand, loam, gesso, pencil, and pigments
160 x 40 x 140 cm

Unique

Coll. Guggenheim Abu Dhabi



Of Men and Gods and Mud

2022

Three-channel video installation,

18 min 48 sec (in loop)

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Edition 1/5: Sharjah Art Foundation

Edition 2/5: Guggenheim Abu Dhabi,

Edition 3/5: Bonnefanten museum in
Maastricht

Photo: Ali Cherri.

Filmed in Northern Sudan, near the
Merowe Dam on the Nile River.

With the brickmakers of Kassinger, Maher
Al Kheir, Mudathir Musa (Sini), Santimaria
Aguero (Santino), Khamis IDris, Saber
Mussa, Jacob Quan, Ayman Shareef.



Ali Cherri: If you prick us, dp we not bleed?

National Gallery, London

March - July 2022

Photos: National Gallery, London.

Starting with research in the National Gallery's archive, Cherri uncovered accounts of five paintings that were vandalised while on display. He was struck by the public's highly emotional response to these attacks, finding that newspaper articles would describe the damages as if they were wounds inflicted on a living being – even referring to the Gallery's conservators as surgeons. He also noticed an overwhelming urge to 'heal', make good and hide the damage. This personification of artworks, and the suggestion that they can experience distress, is reflected in the exhibition's title, taken from Shakespeare's play 'The Merchant of Venice'.

In response, Cherri presents a series of mixed media, sculptural installations that recall aspects of each painting and that imagine its life following the vandalism. They bring into question what Cherri calls the 'politics of visibility'; the decisions we make about how, and to what extent, we accept trauma within museums. By translating each damaged work into a series of strange objects, Cherri reminds us that we are never truly the same after experiencing violence. Assembled in five old-fashioned vitrines reminiscent of early museum displays and cabinets of curiosity, lined up in the Sainsbury Wing and surrounded by Renaissance paintings that often show wounds and suffering, Cherri's installations resonate with sympathy.



The Adoration of the Golden Calf
after Poussin

2022

Installation comprised of a display case containing a bas-relief pedestal in jesmonite, wood and gold leaf, and an eight-legged two-headed taxidermly lamb
188 x 137,5 x 63,5 cm (display case) | 100 x 45 x 50 cm (bas-relief pedestal) | 43 x 44 x 32 cm (taxidermy lamb)

Unique





The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and the Infant Saint John the Baptist ("The Burlington House Cartoon") after Leonardo
2022

Installation comprised of a display case containing a cardboard rendition of a bullet damage, newspapers, a copy of John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, a sculpture comprised of glass eyes and a metal stand. 220 x 170 x 70 cm (display case) | 70 x 7 cm (cardboard)

Unique

Coll. Centre Pompidou, Paris





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The Toilet of Venus ('The Rokeby Venus') after Vélazquez

2022

Installation comprised of a display case containing a 19th-century head carving in marble, a wooden reclining Venus sculpture, a mirror and red velvet fabric
200 x 220 x 80 cm (display case) | 40 x 30 x 30 cm (marble head) | 170 x 80 x 80 cm (wooden Venus)

Unique





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*Self Portrait at the Age of 63 after
Rembrandt*

2022

Installation comprised of a display case
containing the sculpture of Rembrandt's
head in wax and a metal frame

166,4 x 127 x 53,3 cm (display case)

Unique



*The Madonna of the Cat ('La
Madonna del Gatto') after Barocci*
2022

Installation comprised of a display case
containing a taxidermy goldfinch and a
porcelain hand

147,5 x 81,2 x 40,5 cm (display case) | 12
x 10 x 7 cm (goldfinch) | 12 x 37 x 37 cm
(porcelain hand)

Unique

Coll. Contemporary Art Society



Return of the Beast
Galerie Imane Farès, Paris
April - July, 2021

Photos: Tadzio.

Standing at the center of Cherri's fourth solo exhibition at Imane Farès, a one-legged creature carved in marble greets you. Its limbs have not been fully amputated: a fragmented human foot lingers on the right, while the left leg, adorned with scale-like patterns, seems to have sunk into the short plinth. Attached to these mutilated remains is a pale humanoid face. Rimmed with green-blue lines, its eyes are wide-open, as if staggered by you, in a surprising inversion of roles.

Titled *Return of the Beast*, Ali Cherri's exhibition compels us to rethink what we've historically considered as the figure of the monster, by inviting us to reevaluate the gaze that defines this conception.

How do we look at monsters?

How do they look back?

What brings about the monstrous?

The exhibition engages with the trope of the monstrous in a continuation of Cherri's research on hybridity, which has been central to his practice for the better part of the last decade. (...)

—Line Ajan





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The Gatekeepers
Manifesta 13 Marseille
Aug. - Sept. 2020

The Gatekeepers
2020

Four wooden poles or totems referring to the four elements (Fire, Earth, Wind and Water), metal, taxidermy, woodcarving, various objects

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille, supported by [N.A.] Project, Ammodo and Drosos Foundation

Installation views: entrance of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille, Palais Longchamp, in the framework of Manifesta 13 Marseille.
Photos: Jean Christophe Lett / Manifesta & Ali Cherri.

The Gatekeepers draws on the tradition of erecting totem poles at the gates of certain communities. These vertical pillars can welcome, warn or simply tell the story of the people who once lived there. Using figures inspired by the animal kingdom, the aquatic world or crossbreed beasts, *The Gatekeepers* welcome visitors to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille and offer a tribute to the souls of all the animals lodged in the Museum d'Histoire naturelle, only a few steps away, in the opposite wing of Palais Longchamp. Despite the proximity of both these institutions, they reassert the divide between nature and culture – a key feature of knowledge production in western modernity. These vertical pillars offer a substitute to the "pillars of knowledge" that these museums represent, while also echoing the colonnade balcony that connects them both.





Head Nest

2020

Osteological *Ceratogymna atrata*,
Salampasu head mask from Central
Africa, wooden base

100 x 40 x 40 cm

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille,
supported by [N.A!] Project, Ammodo and
Drosos Foundation

Installation view: entrance of the Musée
des Beaux-Arts de Marseille, Palais
Longchamp, as part of Manifesta 13
Marseille.

Photos: Jean Christophe Lett / Manifesta.



Tree House

2020

19th century wooden pole leg, taxidermy
Falco Subbuteo, Chinese dragon head in
porcelain, metal rod and wood
60 x 40 x 40 cm

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille,
supported by [N.A!] Project, Ammodo and
Drosos Foundation

Installation view: entrance of the Musée
des Beaux-Arts de Marseille, Palais
Longchamp, as part of Manifesta 13
Marseille.

Photos: Jean Christophe Lett / Manifesta.



Fish Totem

2020

Taxidermy porcupine fish, 20th century, pole from Salampasu village, anthropomorphic wooden head, metal rod, wood and neoprene tube

160 x 60 x 50 cm

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille, supported by [N.A!] Project, Ammodo and Drosos Foundation

Private collection

Installation view: entrance of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille, Palais Longchamp, as part of Manifesta 13 Marseille.

Photos: Jean Christophe Lett / Manifesta.



Feline And a Bird

2020

19th century patented bronze Sphinx,
taxidermy bird, red colorant

100 x 40 x 40 cm

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille,
supported by [N.A!] Project, Ammodo and
Drosos Foundation

Photo: Ali Cherri



The Book of Mud

2018-2020

Published by Dongola Limited Editions

Vision and Direction – Abed Alkadiri

Edition of 65

[more info](#)

The Book

Limited Edition of 65

Story by Ali Cherri

English Text | Lina Mounzer

Arabic Text | Mariam Janjelo

Design | Reza Abedini

Assistant Designer | Lama Barakat

Photography | Kassem Dabaji

Printing and Binding | Riad Youssef

Cover | Black fabric, Foil debossing

Inside pages | Offset printing on Freelif Vellum
(140 gsm)

Binding | Double bound hardback

Printed in Beirut, Lebanon

The Mudbrick

Unique piece, 2019 | Artifact from the artist's
collection nested in handmade, sun-dried
mudbrick

Made in Deux-Sèvres, France | Frantz Lavenue

The Print

Brickyard, 2020

Silkscreen printed in two colors on Oikos extra
white (100 gsm) signed and numbered by the
artist

Edition of 65 Printed in Beirut by Salim Samara

The Box

Carved beech massif, plywood, and MDF painted
white host the book and brick with a pullout
drawer and a plexiglass lid

Box Production | Tanya Elhajj



Storage

2019

Lightbox, Duratrans print

200 x 125 x 5 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP



Phantom Limb

Jameel Arts Center, Dubai

Oct 2019 - Feb. 2020

In agricultural botany, a graft is a sprout inserted into a slit on a trunk or stem of a living plant, from which it receives sap. In medicine, it's a piece of living tissue that is transplanted surgically to replace diseased or injured tissue. Grafting is often used to create new varieties or species, and it can sometimes be made between different species, that is, human and animal. By performing the assemblage of fragile things, a new appearance, a new life is granted. These hybrids give us a glimpse into the power of matter. By looking at the life cycles of objects and the complexity of preservation and representation of matter, the relationships and tensions between the organic and synthetic, figurative and the abstract, the found and made object are revealed.



Grafting (I)

2019

Apollon Woman's Head; Carved Stone
Statue Representing a Bishop, Normandy;
Polyurethane Foam; Metal Nails
110 x 50 x 30 cm
Unique

Exhibition views: Jameel Arts Center,
Dubai, 2019.



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Grafting (H)

2018

Nok Civilization Terracotta Head; Wood;

Undated Jar; Reparation tape

29 x 13 x 14 cm

Unique

Collection Art Jameel LLC



Grafting (G)

2018

Head of Eros, marble; Lobi Protection

Figure from Burkina Faso, wood; Dried Jay

Wing

50 x 15 x 15 cm

Unique

Collection Art Jameel LLC



Grafting (F)

2018

Terracotta statue representing a sphinx,
Nok Civilization (500 BCE approx.), head of
a roe deer in taxidermy (1950)

36 x 13 cm

Unique



Grafting (C)

2018

Head in marble, 18th century - Wood -

String

26 x 20 x 18 cm (without pedestal)

Unique

Exhibition view [right]: Jameel Arts Center,
Dubai, 2019.



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Grafting (B)

2018

Headless statue in limestone, 14-15th
century; terracotta head, Ghana; wood

Unique

Private collection, Paris



Grafting (Errance)

2023

Headless sandstone bust of St. John
the Baptist, (France, late 11th century);
alabaster head, (France, 18th century);
terracotta votive feet; brass

47 x 32 x 22 cm

Unique



Hybrids (I)

2018

Base Granite – Volcanic Stone head –

Dogon Mali wooden Mask

61 x 22 x 20 cm

Unique

Private collection, New York



Hybrids (F)

2018

Vase with Geometric decoration painted with red slip on orange clay. Polychrome terracotta. Archaeological Site of Ban Chiang, Thailand, around 1000BC. Wood – Taxidermy bird specimen

38 x 34 x 34 cm

Unique

Lazaar Foundation, Tunis



Hybrids (A)

2018

Wooden woman bust from Mali – Pottery
and porcelain fragments of different
provenances and dates - Plinth solid oak

Unique

Private collection



La Classification du vivant

2018

Drawing, pencil, collage and pressed
leaves on canvas

Unique

Private collection



The Weight of History

2018

Three Roman bricks in terracotta from
the site of Ostia Antiqua Skin - bird from a
cabinet de curiosités, c. 1890, unidentified

Tropical specie

Unique

Private collection



The three humors

2017

Two pre-Colombian poporo; Alto Magdalena, Colombia, Pre-Colombian anthropomorphic vase - Chancay, Peru; animal bones, X-XIIIth century

Unique

Coll. FRAC Nouvelle Aquitaine-MÉCA, Bordeaux

The three humors installation is emblematic of the archaeological research that Ali Cherri has been conducting since 2013. Composed of three pre-Columbian objects and animal bones dating from the X-XIIIth century, this work revolves around grafting, a process used in botany and medicine. This gesture thus allows the artist to create hybrid entities, mixing different cultures, eras and geographies and associating the natural with the artificial, the inanimate with the (once) living. Ali Cherri thus revisits the historical dichotomy between nature and culture, revealing its obsolescence.

By reactivating pre-Columbian poporos and vases, the artist also tends to highlight the circulation of these «retrograde objects» (Jane Bennett), whose value was cultural, historical and finally economic.



Endless Falls

2017

Pre-Columbian pot with ornaments;
Manteno culture 850 -1530 AD,
restored with a piece of porcelain from
the excavations of the royal palace of
Ayutthaya - China c. 1700 AD, brass
attachments

Unique

Coll. Kadist, Paris



Where do birds go to hide

2017-2023

Installation composed of two tree trunks, animal bones, grafting mastic, five hand-drawn canvases on canvas, wooden frames, metal bars, a specimen of Russian sparrow from a museum cabinet dating from 1879

Trunk 1 (195 cm long)

Trunk 2 (220 cm high)

Frame (300 cm high)

Exhibition views: *Ceux qui nous regardent*, CAC La Traverse, 2023.

The installation *Where do birds go to hide* turns the encounter with objects freed from normative standards into a spectacle. A dead tree; animal bones; the skin of a taxidermy bird: each of these things on its own is mere debris. But when they are brought together, when they are grafted onto one another in such a way that creates relationships between them, they rise to a new status: that of an active encounter. They are given emotional value: these long-dead things become bodies with the capacity to affect and be affected.





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Where do birds go to hide

2017-2023

Installation comprised of a tree trunk and
a Russian specimen of a sparrow from a
museum cabinet dated from 1879, metallic
bars and hand-drawn canvas

Variable dimensions

Unique



*The Crow, the Owl and Other
Birds*

2018

Five etchings

30 x 23 cm (each)

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Edition 3/5: British Museum, London

The etchings *The Crow, the Owl and Other Birds* are signs of Ali Cherri's fascination with nocturnal birds, leitmotifs that populate his work. Each lithograph reveals in a poetic and delicate way the symbolic power of these creatures, present in many myths and religious texts. The raven's piercing eyes recall its mention in the Koran, while the owl's fixe gaze expresses the strength of this animal, associated with the wisdom of the goddess Athena.



The Melancholy of Birds (C)

2017

Series of 2 lithographs

105 x 74,5 x 3,5 cm (each)

Edition of 5

Ali Cherri's recent projects reflect on the tension between nature and its cultural reproductions. By exploiting the relationships that are forged between memory and fiction, communities and civilizations, the living and the dead, the artist recognizes that history is a fragile space, made up of events and stories rooted in the individual and collective political experience.

In his three series of lithographs *The Melancholy of Birds A, B and C*, Ali Cherri addresses the question of our relationship to nature: nature as an experience or nature as an object of study. He reproduced isolated drawings found on the plates of botanical and ornithological books, and superimposed them in order to «replace» them in their original environment, thus recreating the emotional dimension of our experience in front of nature. Birds are leitmotifs that populate his work. This series reveals in a poetic and delicate way the symbolic power of these creatures, present in many myths and sacred texts.



The Melancholy of Birds (B)

2017

Series of 3 lithographs

105 x 74,5 x 3,5 cm (each)

Edition of 5



The Melancholy of Birds (A)

2017

Series of 4 lithographs

105 x 74,5 x 3,5 cm (each)

Edition of 5



The Egyptian Scale (Triptych)

2016

Historical photograph (1900-1920) - ink
and charcoal

52 x 38 cm (each)

Unique

Exhibition view: Habitar el Mediterraneo,
IVAM, 2017.



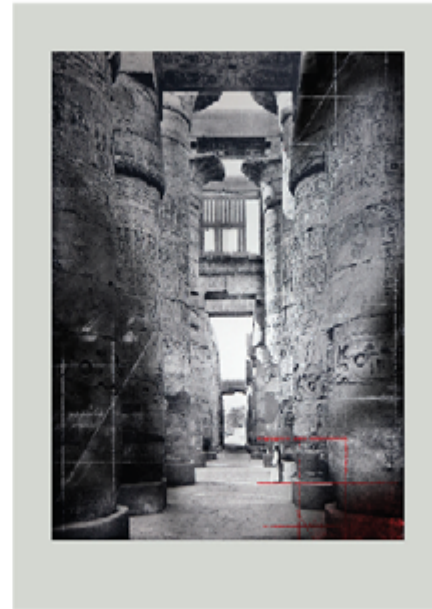
The Egyptian Scale (Quadriptych)

2016

Historical photograph (1900-1920) - ink
and charcoal

52 x 38 cm (each)

Unique



The Flying Machine

2017

Installation comprised of crow wings, bamboo, wood and ropes

Variable dimensions

Unique

Exhibition view: FIAC Hors-les-murs, Jardin des Tuileries, Paris, 2017.

A tribute to dreamers, the installation *The Flying Machine* looks back at the first dreams of flight, from Abbas Ibn Firnas, through Leonardo da Vinci and the Wright brothers. Man has always dreamed of breaking the mould of the formality of his own body, in order to remain suspended in the air, defying the law of gravity.

One of the first flying machines was designed in 875 by Abbas Ibn Firnas, an Andalusian Muslim physician, chemist and engineer (half a century before da Vinci). Ibn Firnas had wings made of wood and bamboo covered with a silk garment that he had trimmed with raptor feathers. Like a bird, he launched himself from a tower overlooking a valley, and, even though the landing was bad (he injured his back), he remained in the air in gliding flight for about ten minutes.

Flying machines went through different phases. The first tests to fly were carried out using ropes and pulleys of various sizes in order to increase the power of the machine. But soon man learned that the gliding flight of the birds, rather than the movement of the wing itself, was the way to achieve sustained flight over a long period of time. So the next step was not to imitate nature, but to design and build winged gliders.

Exhibitions:

- *Léonard de Vinci, le rêve du vol*, Château du Clos Lucé, 13 July - Sept 2018
- *Le vent et les oiseaux m'encouragent*, Palais Ideal du Facteur Cheval, 15 Sept, 2019 - spring 2020
- *Comme un parfum d'aventure*, MAC Lyon, 7 Oct, 2020 - 3 Jan, 2021
- *Dans l'air, les machines volantes*, Hangar Y, 22 March - 10 september 2023





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Plot for a Possible Resurrection

2018

Installation comprised of mud bricks, a stone Jesus Christ Resurrection statue, 15th century, a wooden statue of Jesus Christ (damaged face), 15th century
Variable dimensions
Unique

Exhibition view: biennale internationale d'art contemporain de Melle, Le Grand Monnayage. Photo © Origins Studio

The placement of the archaeological object is central in the work of Ali Cherri. It raises questions about the choice of objects shown in museums because it is not trivial and indicates the vision that each culture wishes to give to its history, what trace we preserve from the past. With *Plot for a Possible Resurrection*, Ali Cherri creates a space of archaeological excavations where objects are revealed showing traces of erosion. Mud serves to cultivate crops for its richness, but also engulfs everything during cataclysms. It is this mud that occupies the exhibition space and exposes some objects that it has imprisoned within. Nature always takes over and therefore, the objects transformed by man erode. The cut stone becomes stone again, the soil becomes mud again.

Although the silver mines of Melle had been forgotten for several centuries, then were rediscovered, Ali Cherri was interested in the formation of layers of limestone and stalactites that the penetration of water formed on the stone rubble left by the miners. These natural marks of the passage of time and of the victory of nature over human interventions were sources of inspiration for the work *Plot for a Possible Resurrection* that becomes part of this biennial as a mirror of the mines.



Plot for a Possible Resurrection

2018

Installation comprised of mud bricks, a stone Jesus Christ Resurrection statue, 15th century, a wooden statue of Jesus Christ (damaged face), 15th century

Variable dimensions

Unique

Exhibition view: biennale internationale d'art contemporain de Melle, Le Grand Monnayage.

Photo: Origins Studio.



Qubba

2019

Photograph

75 x 114,5 x 3 cm (framed)

Edition of 5



Four Masks

2018

Four inkjet prints on baryta paper, one
frame

44 x 160 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Lazaar Foundation, Tunis



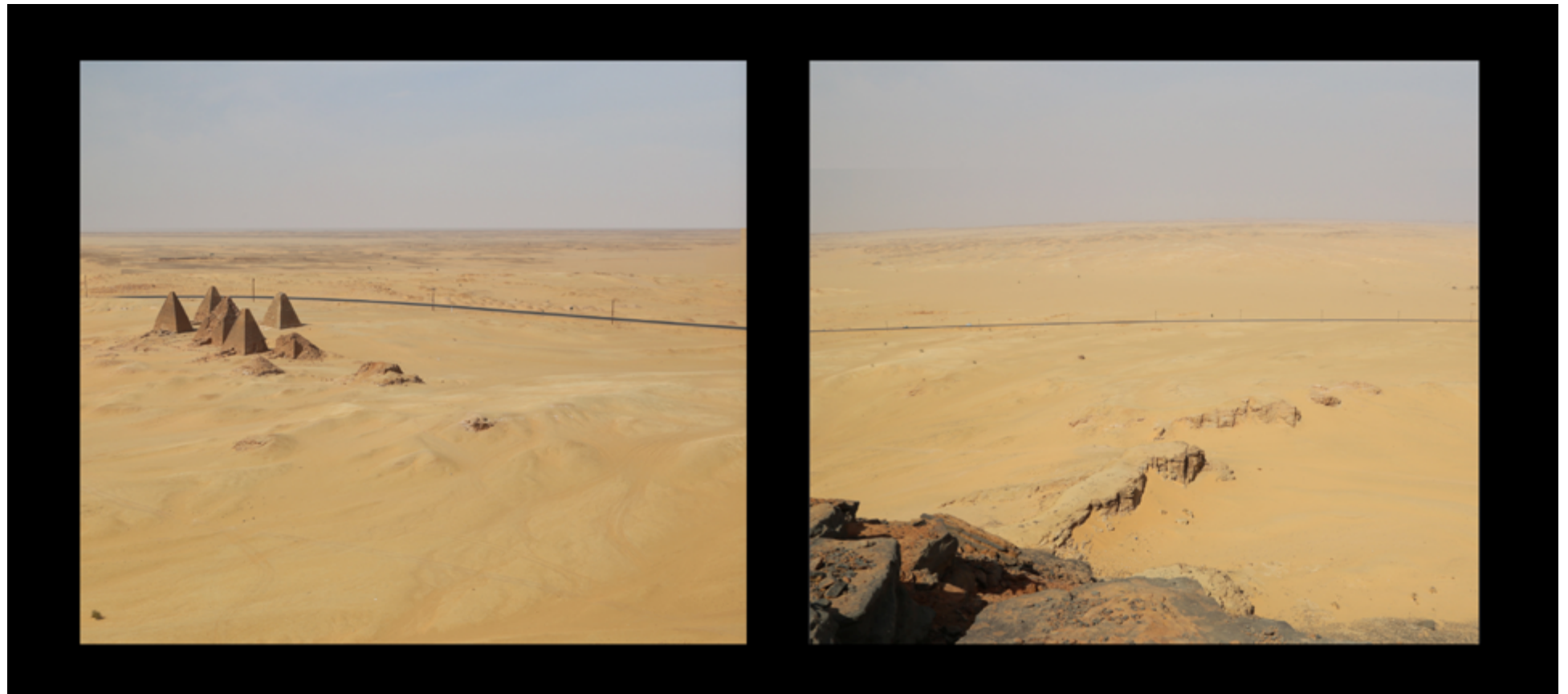
Deserts (1)

2018

Two inkjet prints on baryta paper, one
frame

54 x 118 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Deserts (2)

2018

Two inkjet prints on baryta paper, one
frame

54 x 118 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Somniculus

2017

HD video, colour, sound

14 min 40 sec

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Musée national d'art moderne/
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

Ed. 2/5: Lazaar Foundation, Tunis

"Filmed inside a series of empty museum galleries across Paris, Cherri's new work *Somniculus* (the Latin word for "light sleep") articulates the tension between the lives of dead objects and the living world that surrounds them. Artefacts from museums of ethnography, archaeology and natural sciences are all presented in their existing cultural context as the surviving objects of human interest. (...) We see how these objects might relate to us in a pre-modern sense, as objects endowed with their own autonomy and agency.

Although the modern era has given rise to a divide between the living and the non-living, human and nonhuman, culture and nature, the project of existing museum practice seeks to bring objects of the past to life by reactivating historical narratives. (...)

These fragments of loss, destruction and violence stand in as representations of civilizations' past. In accordance with the cultures they serve to represent, these objects are neither caught inside the deep dark past nor immediately visible in the light of our present day, but forever waiting to be awakened."

— Osei Bonsu

Exhibitions:

- *Satellite 10* / Ali Cherri, Jeu de Paume,
Paris, 14 Feb - 28 May, 2017

- The Abraaj Group Art Prize 2018,
Madinat Jumeirah, 20-24 March, 2018



Still Life

2017

Lightbox, Duratrans print

152,5 x 96,5 x 7 cm

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Exhibitions:

- *Satellite 10 / Ali Cherri*, Jeu de Paume,

Paris, 14 Feb - 28 May, 2017

- *Fruit of Sleep*, Nicolas Sursock Museum,

Beirut, 14 Oct 2017 - 1 Jan 2018



Petrified/Fragments (I)

2016

Installation includes:

- *Fragments (II)*, fragmentary archaeological artefacts, ethnographic objects, skull casting, taxidermy bird, light table

Variable dimensions

- *Petrified*, single-channel video, color and sound

Duration: 12 min

Collection MAC VAL, with the support of Fram
île-de-France

Ali Cherri's work, *Petrified/Fragments*, consists of a video shot in a wildlife park and an archaeological museum in the United Arab Emirates, and an installation of objects gathered on a light table. It offers a critical point of view on the process of patrimonialization of archaeological objects, from the excavation sites to the museum display. The objects filmed in the video, emerging alternately from the darkness, are the same ones facing us, in procession on the light table. They come from various eras and civilizations, heterogeneous in their materials, but all of them feature faces or bodies. Ali Cherri acquired them at auction. Far from the civilization that saw them appear and gives them meaning, they feed the art market - whether their authenticity is proven or not. Here, these relics are devoid of name, title or date, label or cartel: they appear to us as floating, disconnected from any language. This mutism results from their status as exhumed fragments, and reveals the nature of the excavation work, which, according to the artist, consists concretely and symbolically of a real uprooting.

Exhibitions:

- Aichi Triennale 2016
- Le vent se lève, MAC VAL, 2020





Petrified/Fragments (II)

2016

The installation includes:

- *Fragments (II)*, a set of archaeological artefacts, taxidermy bird

Variable dimensions

- *Petrified*, single-channel video, color and sound

Duration: 12 min

Installation: Unique

Video: Edition of 5

Exhibition view: Sursock Museum, 2017.

Exhibitions:

- *Ali Cherri, A Taxonomy of Fallacies: The Life of Dead Objects*, Nicolas Sursock Museum, Beirut, 12 May - Aug 1, 2016

- *L'économie du vivant*, CAPC, Bordeaux, 2 Feb - 30 April, 2017

- *Anche le statue muoiono*, Fondazione Museo delle Antichità Egizie, Torino, 9 March - 9 Sept. 2018

- *MAC International*, MAC, Belfast, 9 Nov, 2018 - 31 March, 2019





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Petrified

2016

Single-channel video, color and sound

Duration: 12 min

Edition of 5

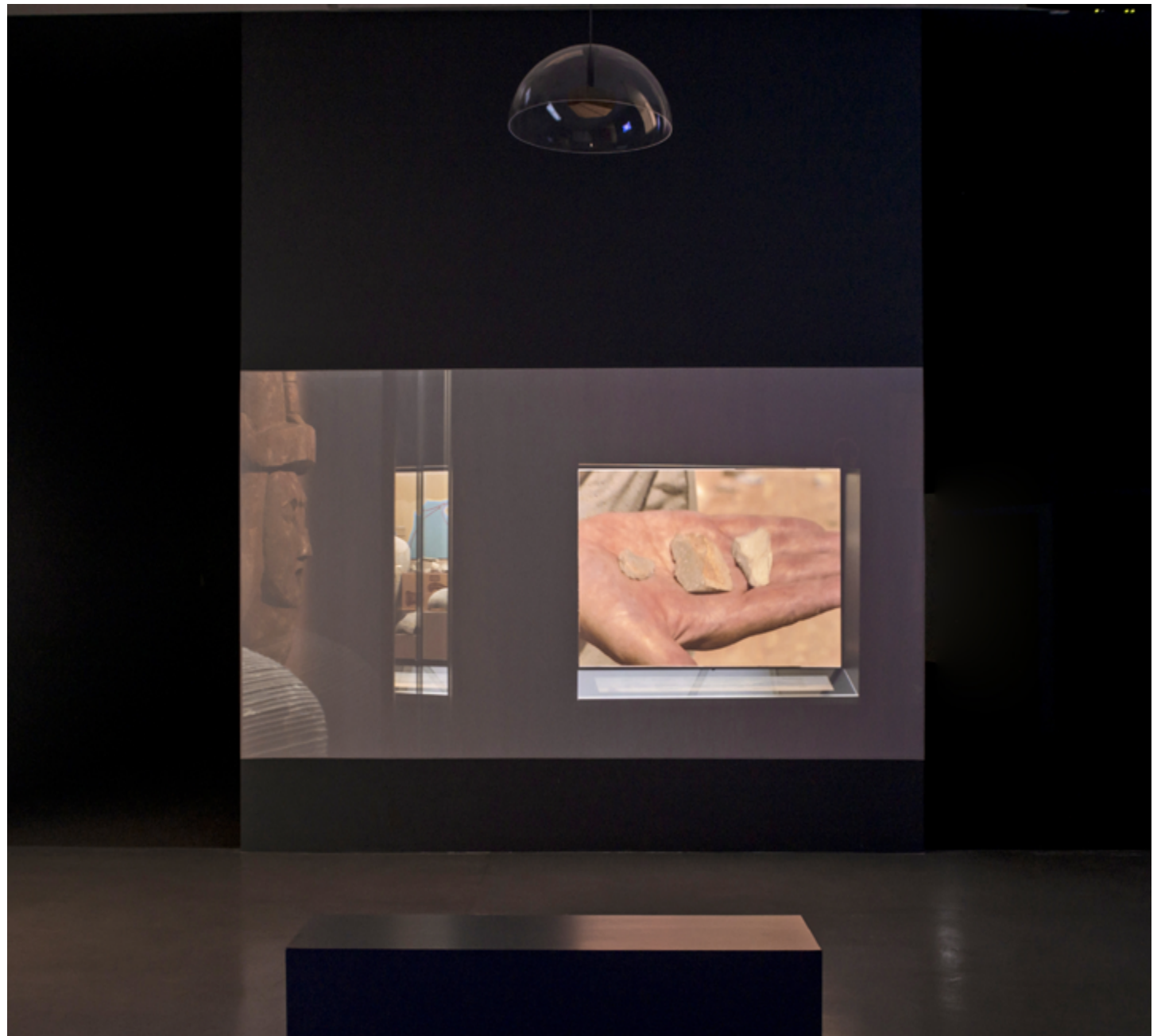
Exhibition view: Sharjah Art Foundation,
2017

Exhibitions:

- *Home Beirut - Sounding Neighbors*,
MAXXI, Rome, 14 Nov, 2017 - 8 April, 2018

- *La Boîte_un lieu d'art contemporain*,
Tunis, 13 - 17 April 2019

- *Ceux qui nous regardent*, CAC La
Traverse, Alfortville, 2023



The Digger

2015

HD Video, colour, sound

24 min

Arabic and Pashto with English subtitles

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE

Ed. 2/5: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York, USA

Ed. 3/5: FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte-
Provence, Marseille, France

Ed. 4/5: Museo Delle Civiltà, Rome, Italy

"My approach to archeology is not motivated by love of ruins, but by a desire to excavate that which has survived. While one end of archeology culminates in the encasing of History within exquisitely-lit, precisely-labeled glass boxes, on the other end there is the raw material, the archeological site itself, with all its potential sculptural qualities. The discovery of an excavation site goes hand-in-hand with its destruction: the more we unearth, the more we destroy. In the past years, the United Arab Emirates has witnessed a number of archeological discoveries. The U.A.E. is a place said to be always running away from its urban ruins: as soon as a structure starts to decay, the machines of demolition and reconstruction roar forth to erase its traces. The film follows the guard of the archeological ruins, Sultan, on his daily tour around the 5000-year-old necropolis. The film blurs the boundary of documentary and video art, but it essentially blurs the position of the artist as a historian or as a chronicler."

— Ali Cherri

Exhibition:

- *Matérialité de l'invisible, l'archéologie des sens*, centquatre, Paris, 13 Feb - 30 April, 2016



*Le Dernier Homme (1), (2), (3), (4),
(5), (6), (7)*

2015

Archival Inkjets on paper

35 x 50 cm (each)

Edition of 3 + 2 AP



Wildlife

2015

Lightbox, Duratrans print

200 x 125 cm

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

1 AP: Les Abattoirs, Musée Frac Occitanie,
Toulouse

Exhibition:

- *L'économie du vivant*, CAPC, Bordeaux, 2
Feb - 30 April, 2017



The Disquiet

2013

HD video, colour, sound

20 min

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon

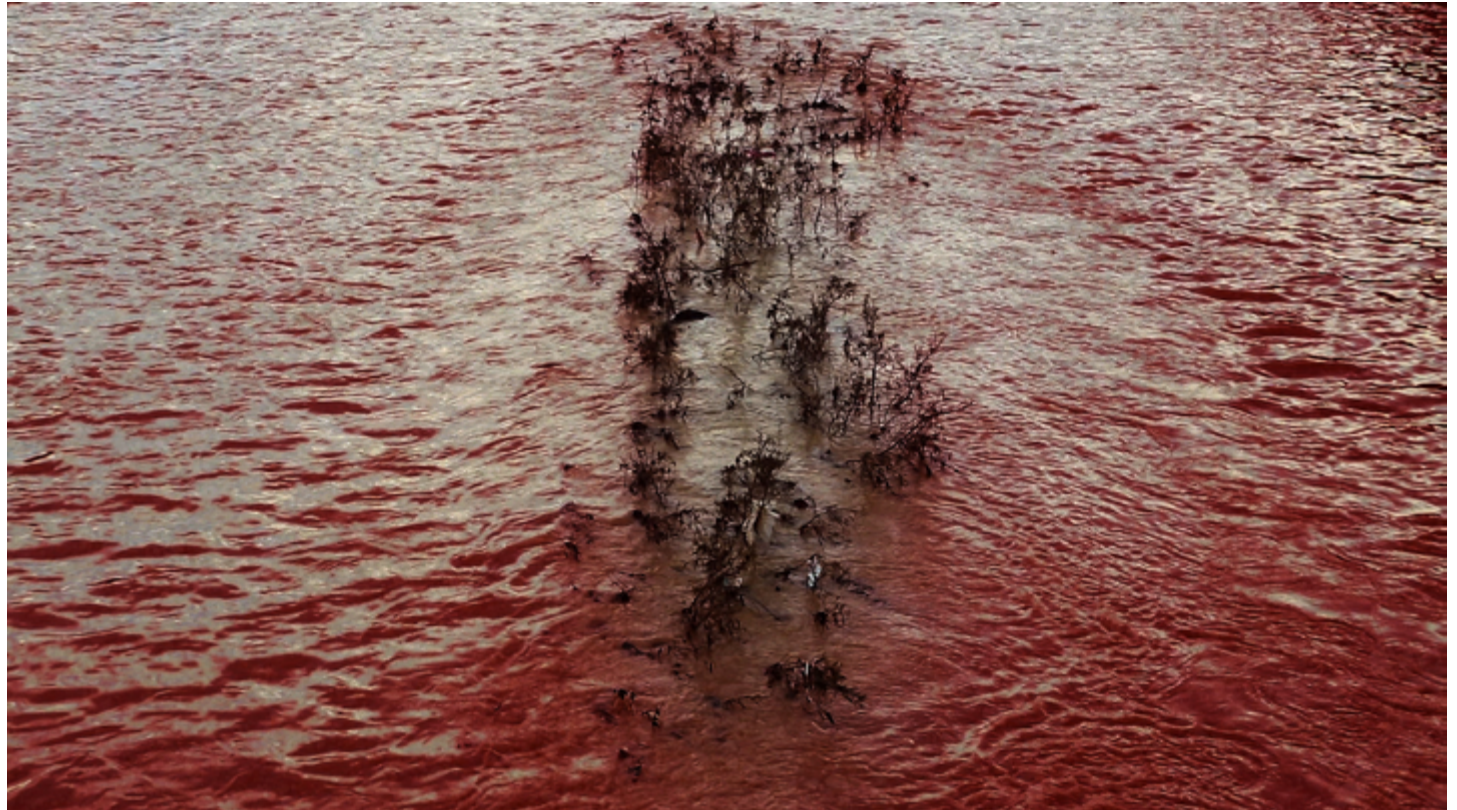
Ed. 3/5: Saudi Art Council, Saudi Arabia

Earth-shattering events are relatively par for the course in Lebanon, with war, political upheaval and a number of social revolts. While the Lebanese focus on surface level events that could rock the nation, few realize that below the ground we walk on, an actual shattering of the earth is mounting. Lebanon stands on several major fault lines, which are cracks in the earth's crust. *The Disquiet* investigates the geological situation in Lebanon, seeking out the traces of the imminent disaster.

Sequences of long walks in nature alternate with seismographic mechanisms inscribing a disaster-in-becoming and then with history of recent earthquakes in Lebanon through archival images and old drawings. An inevitability of natural and political synchronicities in a given region, that reigns in the voiceover narration, is transformed in the last part of the film. A space for hope is introduced, where it is suggested that one has to leave the document(ary) mode of narrating and enter into a speculation, in solitude and lucidity of one's own mind and beliefs.

Exhibitions:

- *Lest the two seas meet*, Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, 2 Feb - 23 Aug 2015
- *Skin Off Our Time*, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, 27 Feb - 30 March, 2015
- *Earth and Ever After*, The Saudi Art Council, Jeddah, 10 Feb - 5 May, 2016
- *The End of the World*, Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art, 17 Oct 2016 - 19 March, 2017



Dust and Other Anxieties

2013

Archival inkjet print mounted on Dibond

90 x 160 cm

Edition of 3 + 2 AP



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Heroes: The Rise and Fall

2013

Sculpture, chrome-plated brass and
granite

56 x 26 x 13 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

Ed. 2/8: Contemporary Art Platform,
Koweït

Ed. 3/8: Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE

Exhibitions:

- *L'autoroute de la soie*, Yallay, Hong-Kong,
8 Nov - 8 Dec 2013

- *La città che sale / the City Rises*, Bid
Project Gallery, Milan, 28 May - 30 Sept,
2015



Trembling Landscapes (Beirut)

2016

Lithographic Prints and Archival Ink

Stamps

70 x 100 cm (each)

Edition of 7 + 2 AP

Trembling Landscapes (Beirut) belongs to a series of aerial maps representing Algiers, Beirut, Damascus, Erbil, Makkah, and Tehran. The cities that Cherri has selected are situated on active fault lines, the coordinates of which are marked with red stamps. The precarity of these landscapes is paralleled by the social and political unrest that has come to characterize their locations. Cherri's restrained cartographic diagrams offer an alternative to the media's explicit representations of disaster by investigating the region's geologic fissures.

Exhibitions (of all or parts of the *Trembling Landscapes* series):

- *Bird's Eye View*, Cap Kuwait Commercial Space, Kuwait, 19 Nov - 19 Dec, 2014
- *Typographies (re) Discovered*, NYU Abu Dhabi, Feb 19-21, 2015
- *Earth and Ever After*, The Saudi Art Council, Jeddah, 10 Feb - 5 May, 2016
- *The End of the World*, Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art, 17 Oct 2016 - 19 March, 2017
- *Fragiles héritages*, Hôtel-Dieu du Puy-en-Velay, 18 May - 16 Sept, 2018
- *Living in the Mediterranean*, IVAM, Valencia, 22 Nov, 2018 - 14 April, 2019



Trembling Landscapes (Mekkah)

2016

Lithographic Print and Archival Ink Stamp

70 x 100 cm

Edition of 7 + 2 AP

Ed. 6/7 : Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE



Trembling Landscapes (Erbil)

2014

Lithographic Print and Archival Ink Stamp

40 x 60 cm

Edition of 7 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/7: Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE

Ed. 2/7: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York, USA



Trembling Landscapes (Algiers)

2014

Lithographic Print and Archival Ink Stamp

40 x 60 cm

Edition of 7 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/7: Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE

Ed. 2/7: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York, USA



Trembling Landscapes (Tehran)

2014

Lithographic Print and Archival Ink Stamp

40 x 60 cm

Edition of 7 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/7: Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE

Ed. 2/7: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York, USA



Trembling Landscapes (Damas)

2014

Lithographic Print and Archival Ink Stamp

40 x 60 cm

Edition of 7 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/7: Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE

Ed. 2/7: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York, USA



Archéologie (Égypte)

2014

Map (1876), ink and charcoal

45,5 x 60,5 x 3 cm

Unique

Other works in the series *Archéologie*:

Archéologie (Îles Britanniques)

Archéologie (Mappemonde)

Archéologie (Suisse)

Archéologie (France)

Archéologie (Océan Glacial)

Archéologie (Égypte)

Archéologie (Algérie)

Archéologie (Europe)

Archéologie (Amérique)

Archéologie (Asie)

Archéologie (Amérique du Sud)

Archéologie (Espagne et Portugal)

Archéologie (Océanie)

When the use-value of an object expires, its historical importance and auratic presence gains our attention. In that way, for his work *Atlas 1876 – 2014*, Cherri placed an old atlas from 1876 inside a resin frame and thus stopped the ageing process of this book of obsolete knowledge. Similarly, although created in unawareness of Mangelos' conceptual artworks, Ali Cherri's *Archéologie* are reminders of the amazing series *Paysages de la mort* or *Paysage de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (1950s-1970s) of that late Croatian/Serbian conceptual artist. The maps of the old atlas are blackened, wiped away from their primary function as orientations and recognizable territories, and morphed into a thick black mass on paper.

Exhibitions:

- *Earth and Ever After*, The Saudi Art Council, Jeddah, 10 Feb - 5 May, 2016

- *Beyond Borders*, Fondation Boghossian Villa Empain, Brussels, 6 Sept, 2018 - 3 Feb, 2019



Pipe Dreams

2011

Two-channel video installation

5 min (looped)

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 3/5: MACBA, Barcelona

Exhibitions:

- MoMA, New York, November 8, 2012

- San Francisco Int'l Film Festival, 2013

- VCUQatar, 2 Nov - 22 Dec 2014

- *Lest the two seas meet*, Muzeum Sztuki
Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, 2 Feb - 23 Aug
2015

- *Mare Medi Terraneum*, Es Baluard Museu
d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma, 13
March - 30 Aug 2015

- *The Migrant (Moving) Image - Chapt. 3*,
A Tale of a Tub, Rotterdam, 18 December,
2015 - January 10, 2016

- *Punk Orientalism*, MacKenzie Art Gallery,
Regina, 10 Nov, 2018 - 17 Feb, 2019

- *Beirut Lab: 2019(2020)*, Claire Trevor
School of Arts, Irvine, 5 Oct - 14 Dec 2019



My pain is real

2010

Video, 5 min 30 sec

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Saradar Collection, Lebanon



Un cercle autour du soleil

2005

Video, 15 min.

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Saradar Collection, Lebanon

Exhibitions:

- *Ce que raconte la solitude*, Friche la Belle

de Mai, Marseille, 30 Aug - 21 Dec, 2014

- *Meeting*, LIFE - base des sous-marins,
Saint-Nazaire, 13-16 Nov, 2014

- *Beirut Lab: 2019(2020)*, Claire Trevor
School of Arts, Irvine, 5 Oct - 14 Dec 2019

