

# Video Program

## **La Rose de personne**, Ghassan Salhab

Video. 2000. 12'

Without stopping, *La Rose de personne* runs through Hamra street in Beirut, a street overflowing with history, fiction, fantasy, but also a street among others: a street at grips with the real. Through an automobile windshield, this street is "traversed". An automobile in which a woman and a man remain practically off-screen, from beginning to end. The words they exchange (is it really a dialogue?) reach us almost drowned out by a flood of sounds, the sounds of Hamra street itself, and of several radio stations. It's a kind of continuous flux, a sort of flowing river, where sound and image ceaselessly unfurl. The video is a discreet homage to the great poet Paul Celan.

*Ghassan Salhab was born in Senegal in 1958. He has written and directed three feature films: The Last Man, which screened at Locarno and Montpellier film festivals in 2006; Terra Incognita, selected by Cannes Film Festival in 2002; and Beyrouth Fantôme, shown at Trois Continents Nantes in 1998. His short films and videos include Narcisse Perdu (2004), Mon Corps Mort, Mon Corps Vivant (2003), La Rose de Personne (2000), Baalbeck (1999), with Akram Zaatari and Mohamad Soueid, Afrique Fantôme (1994), and Après la Mort (1991).*

*He currently teaches film at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA).*

## **Red Chewing Gum**, Akram Zaatari

Video. 2000. 10'

*Red Chewing Gum* is a video letter that tells a story of separation between two men set within the context of the changing Hamra, a formerly booming commercial center. The video looks at image-making in relationship to consumption and the possession of desired subjects. It examines the issue of desire, power, and the attempt to capture the fleeting time.

*Born in 1966, Akram Zaatari is an artist who lives and works in Beirut. He is the author of more than 40 videos, exploring issues pertinent to postwar Lebanon particularly the mediation of territorial conflicts and wars through television, the logic of religious and national resistance, and the production and circulation of images in the context of geographically divided Middle East. Co-founder of the Arab Image Foundation (Beirut), Zaatari based his work on collecting, studying, and archiving the archive of Studio Shehrazade (photographer Hashem el Madani) as a register of social relationships and of photographic practices.*

## **Replay (bis)**, Lamia Joreige

Video & Super 8. 2002. 9'

The starting point of *Replay (bis)* is the idea of rupture in a time and place that are undefined. The story, which might have been experienced or dreamt, is repeated in various forms. The images appear as reminiscences of the past, as well as attempts to reconstruct a narrative. These attempts make room for one final long shot: A view of Beirut today, at the time of the dusk prayer; as if this last image, inducing contemplation, had become my ultimate way of relating the story.

*Lamia Joreige was born in 1972. She lives and works as an artist and filmmaker in Beirut. Her work has featured in various local and international exhibitions, festivals and publications. Her installations include Je d'Histoires (2006), Objects of War (1999-2006), Replay (2000), and Le déplacement (1998-2000). Her documentaries include A Journey (2006), and Houna Wa Roubbama Hounak (2003). Joreige has published two books: Time and the Other (2004), and Ici et peut-être ailleurs (2003).*

## **Saving Face**, Jalal Toufic

Video. 2003. 8'

Were all the candidates' faces posted on the walls of Lebanon during the parliamentary campaign of 2000 waiting for the results of the elections? No. As faces, they were waiting to be saved. Far better than any surgical face-lift or digital retouching, it was the physical removal of part of the poster of the face of one candidate so that the face of another candidate would partially appear under it; as well as the accretions of posters and photographs over each other that produced the most effective face-lift, and that proved a successful face-saver for all concerned. We have in these resultant recombinant posters one of the sites where Lebanese culture in specific, and Arabic culture in general, mired in an organic view of the body, in an organic body, exposes itself to inorganic bodies.

*Jalal Toufic is a thinker, writer, and artist. He is the author of Distracted (1991; 2nd ed., 2003), (Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film (1993; 2nd ed., 2003), Over-Sensitivity (1996), Forthcoming (2000), Undying Love, or Love Dies (2002), Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You (2005), and 'Àshûrà': This Blood Spilled in My Veins (2005). His videos and mixed-media works have been presented in such venues as Artists Space, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Witte de With, Rotterdam; Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; and the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens.*

### **Un cercle autour du soleil (A Circle Around the Sun), Ali Cherri**

Video. 2005. 14'

"I was disappointed the day they announced the war had ended. I used to be elated by the idea of living in a city that was eating itself, like excess stomach fluid that digests and gradually eats away the stomach."

How to live in Beirut, a city that is always already in ruin?

*Ali Cherri was born in Beirut in 1976. He studied graphic design at the American University of Beirut (AUB), and performing arts at DasArts in Amsterdam. His work includes the videos Untitled (2006) and Un cercle autour du soleil (2005), and the performances Give Me a Body Then (2006) and As Dead as Ever (2005). Cherri has also worked as a set designer on a number of performances and plays such as The Anthem (2006) by Gabriel Yammine, 10/20 Irrelevant (2003) by Abia Khoury, and Biokhraphia (2001) by Lina Saneh and Rabih Mroué.*

### **Lebanon/War, 3 short films, Rania Stephan**

Video. 2006. 15'

These short videos present a fantastic ledger of how the average Lebanese negotiated daily life during and right after the July 2006 war. Compelling vignettes that give voice to people, far from the bombastic frenzy of media broadcast, the tragedy of war is recorded with humility and simplicity.

*Born in Beirut, Rania Stephan has worked as a sound engineer, camera, editor, first assistant and producer with renowned filmmakers including Simone Bitton (The Wall and Citizen Bishara) and Elia Suleiman (Divine Intervention). Her filmography includes: Tribe (1993), Phaedra(s) (1994), Attempt at Jealousy (1995), Baal and Death (1997), My First Camera (1998), Train-Trains (Where's the Track?) (1999), Arrest at Manara (2003), Kimo the Taxi (2003), Wastelands (2005), Lebanon/War (2006). She is currently working on a creative documentary titled The Three Disappearances of Suad Hosni, on the legendary Egyptian film star who passed away recently.*

### **Face A/Face B, Rabih Mroué**

Video. 2002. 10'

In 1978, my brother Manuel, who had just arrived from Cuba, wrote lyrics to a song, and synchronized them to a Russian tune. We sang it and sang it till we memorized it, recorded it and sent the audiotape to my brother Abou Salam, living in the USSR at the time.

*Rabih Mroué (born 1967 in Beirut) is an actor, director and playwright. In 1990 he began putting on his own plays, performances, and videos. His works deal with the issues that have been swept under the table in the current political climate of Lebanon. He draws much-needed attention to the broader political and economic contexts by means of semi-documentary theatre.... Among Mroué's works: L'Abat-Jour (1990), The Lift (1993), Come in Sir We are Waiting for You Outside (1998), Three Posters (2000), Face A/Face B (video, 2002), Biokhraphia (2002), Looking for a missing Employee (2003), Bir-rooh Bid-dam (video, 2003), Who's Afraid of Representation? (2004) and Make me stop smoking (2006).*

### **Rawane's Song, Mounira Al Solh**

Video. 2006. 7'

Through a fictional story, and two red shoes that might represent the alter ego of the artist, this video speaks ironically about identity and war. The fiction isn't totally fictional and the playfulness isn't always as playful as suggested.

*Born in Beirut in 1978, Mounira Al Solh works with video, and multimedia installations. She lives between Beirut and Amsterdam, where she is currently a resident artist at the Rijksakademie. Al Solh has been working on issues related to the Lebanese socio-political and religious conflicts. Her approach is not realistic but fictional, or even fantastic. While transforming dramatic situations into ironical ones, Al Solh criticises issues of identity in parallel to those of aesthetics and art.*

### **Moving Out, Fouad Elkoury**

Video. 2004. 20'

The film portrays the separation of a family. The mother and two children move out of a house while the father stays on, alone. The action takes place over two days, the time for the house to be emptied of its furniture. There is no reference to a happy past, the tension rises from the mere packing of the objects.

*Born in 1952 in Paris, Fouad Elkoury began his artistic career by photographing Beirut during the civil war. This led to several publications, among which Beyrouth Aller-Retour (1984) and Beirut City Centre (1992). His later works combine photography, text and video. Sombres and Letters to Francine (2002) revolve around wounds, Moving out (2004) portrays the separation of a family, Welcome to Beirut (2006) is about daily life in the city, On war and love (2006) reflects on the dimension of intimacy in wartime. He is a founding member of the Arab Image Foundation.*