



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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Department of the Arts | Visual Arts Program
Supervised by Professor Duncan MacDonald







INTRODUCTION

Professor Duncan MacDonald
Director Visual Arts Program
Associate Professor of Practice

To whom it may concern:

I hope this message finds you well. It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the culmination of work by students from the Visual Arts program at the American University in Cairo. Over the course of two semesters these ten students have synthesized research from disparate sources such as marine biology, critical theory, the Quran, pop culture, religious iconography, philosophy, fiction, etc. - developing and testing their own theories and ideas with forms, methodologies, technologies, and experiments. Within this research-based educational and artistic process, theory is not proven - it is, in fact, created. Through a process of lengthy discussions, studio experiments, and critiquing, we have arrived here.

This catalogue is meant to act as a passport for these students who have worked at developing their own praxis - a proposal where theory and practice are married within in an inextricably linked methodology. The concept of this publication acting as a passport for students to visit the conceptual and geo-political realities of our world is at once absurd, and simultaneously intensely profound. What can, if anything, they contribute to this world that is struggling to sustain its own inhabitants?

The utopian concept of “anything is possible” seems naïve and too good to be true. But, we find ourselves saying this to the Youth of today. How can these students take their work in academia and transplant it into the eco-systems of hyper-capitalism, the Anthropocene, multiple religions, and still retain their own sense of criticality and intrigue?

I propose that the answer to this question is simply work. The root of all positive change can be linked to cooperation, collaboration, and meaningful work. What you find within the pages of this catalogue are not so much answers to questions concerning how the world can be re-configured to meet the belief systems we enjoy; instead, you find questions that should prompt the curious to question everything. This creative form of criticality is at the heart of our show. This is the start of our work, and we feel it concerns all.

Regards,
Duncan MacDonald







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Do Hee Kim
**MISGUIDED
OBSESSION**

Interactive installation

Human beings have a strong desire to fit within their community, and are often discriminated against or favored based on our physical appearance. Cosmetic surgery is an extreme method utilized by individuals as a desperate attempt to achieve certain standards of beauty according to one's society.

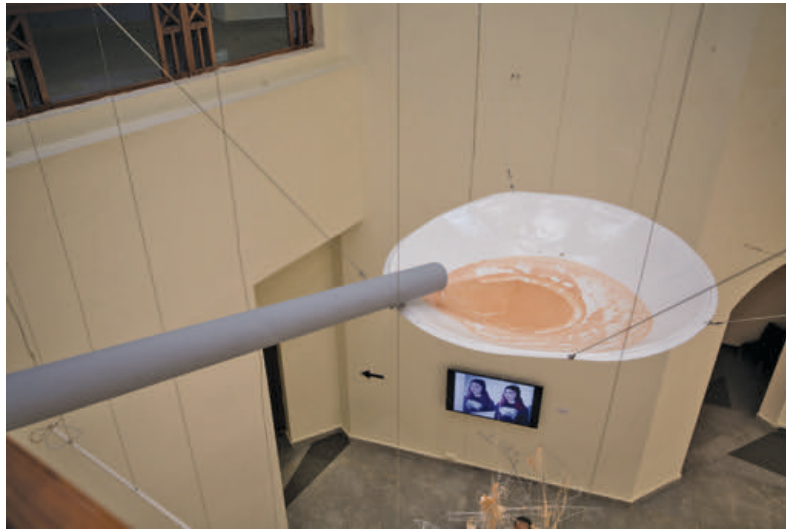
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Human beings have a natural desire to categorize themselves against certain standards; maybe, this strong desire comes from a search for a 'sense of belonging'. Research points to the fact that people avoid being the "odd man out", which is to say we do not wish to stand out among crowds.¹ Therefore, we exert great efforts to fit within the categories established by society. We are categorized according to varied elements, the most significant or dominant is our physical appearance. Every society has its own standard of beauty regardless of gender, where cosmetic products, aesthetic equipment or plastic surgery is used as a means to reach the ideal standard of beauty within that society.² The cosmetic operations people undergo are often dangerous and unnecessary; however, it has been recorded that our unique bodily features are used to discriminate against others³, and our strong 'sense of belonging' easily prompts us to take this risk. Generally, by reforming our appearance, we receive adoration and attention from others and feel more settled and accepted within our environment. Moreover, this 'sense of belonging' is an important issue in the field of psychology called 'social conformation'. We share

common norms or general knowledge in society, which results in various forms of homogenization. Therefore, any act or thought that is against these norms, is often considered as abnormal or unusual. This becomes the origin of discrimination within society.

Regardless of the aforementioned social issues, plastic surgery is becoming a massive trend⁴, in some cases leading people to obsession. It is becoming a prominent method people use to fit in to their society; importantly, it has practical and aesthetic outcomes that can readily be seen. Numerous researchers are focusing on the failure of cosmetic operations to develop our awareness against this 'obsession'. Some societies in particular, like Korea, are facing the side-effects of this trend, with a great number of individuals losing their unique identity. In certain regions like Gangnam, people seem as if they are all manufactured from one factory.⁵ The intensity of this surgical obsession may vary in across regions and societies, it is clearly shown in the Cosmetic Surgery National Data Bank Statistics 2016⁶ that the percentage of cosmetic operations have been consistently increasing ever since it has been recorded. Therefore,

1 (Mulholland, The Psychology of Harry Potter: An Unauthorized Examination of the Boy Who Lived, 2006)

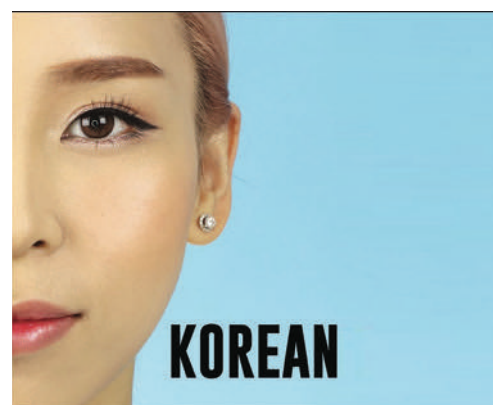
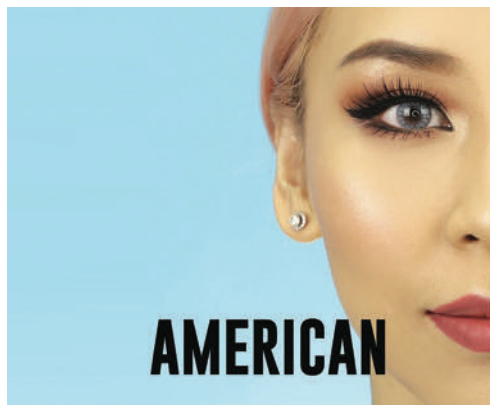
2 (SeulHye, Nationality of plastic consumption / ㅁㅁㅁㅁ ㅁㅁㅁㅁ, 2017)

3 (Seul, History of Consumerism / ㅁㅁㅁ ㅁㅁ, 2017)

4 (SeulHye, 2017)

5 (Vojtíšková, 2017)

6 (N/A, 2016 Cosmetic Surgery National Data Bank Statistics, 2016)



American VS Korean Makeup, Tina Yong Youtube Channel





I am proposing a project to question, confront, and possibly resolve this extreme obsession of physical reformation by inviting the audience into an installation space filled with sculptures. Through their direct participation and interaction within the installation, I intend to lead them to help them to think once more of the cosmetic surgeries and possibly avoid it and eventually lead to the self-acceptance.

Research and knowledge of cosmetic history develops and deepens the conceptual parameters of this project, given its participatory element. The ancient Greeks period were obsessed with the concept of beauty. Artists were searching for perfect human proportions to portray the ideal beauty in sculptures, and by looking at these classical art pieces, we could predict the presence of beauty standards, or harmony.⁷ Moreover, even in the Ancient Egyptian period, records show that they were using varied natural elements such as coals as cosmetic materials,⁸ and it is currently known that the ancient Egyptian tomb paintings are the primary records remaining today to back up this argument.¹⁰ Furthermore, during and after the Middle Ages, make-up was suppressed due to religious beliefs.^{11,12} It was during the Renaissance when great obsession with beauty resulted in a crisis which we can find from records where a great number of the global population died due to metal toxemia.

The cosmetics of the past were not as strictly regulated as today regarding their makeup from materials; we did not understand the dangers of lead as a material for example. As such, lead was used as a whitening material for a long period of time resulting in toxicity and

7 (Bonafini, 2010)
 8 (Lawrence Charles Parish, 1988)
 9 (Pack, 2008)
 10 (N/A, N/A)
 11 (N/A, Cosmetics / □, N/A)
 12 (Lawrence Charles Parish, 1988)

eventually the death of many people.¹³
¹⁴The extreme obsession of beauty is evident in South Korea today, where people are mostly obsessed with their appearances regardless of their gender, and undertaking surgical cosmetic procedures to meet the social standard of beauty.¹⁵ Today's beauty standards in Korea could be related to the effects of globalization, which delivered and popularized the dominance of western cultural norms, creating a particular idealism where western appearances are regarded as more beautiful. It could be argued that by abandoning the physical differences of appearance, coupled with social or cultural ignorance, the practice of creating this absolute westernized standard of beauty, created a new race of Gangnam-in (image 2)¹⁶, the artificially westernized Koreans who are mostly found in the region of Gangnam in South Korea.

However, South Korea had the same crisis of metal toxemia even in the history where the influence of western culture was absent; this shows that westernization did not wholly instigate this issue, but it was a mere booster alongside modern technologies and developments. This extreme obsession with beauty affects South Koreans globally;

13 (Lawrence Charles Parish, 1988)
 14 (N/A, The history of fashion and make-up before the 20th century)
 15 (Vojtišková, 2017)
 16 (Vojtišková, 2017)



Women in Gangnam Area, Vojtišková, 2017





Draw on Me, Ji Yeo, Performance, New York, 2010

including people who are living outside of Korea, like myself. I recognize the significance of this social issue through varied social media, enabling a platform for these viral trends to proliferate globally.

While on one hand, modern technology spreads these viral trends, some people on the other hand are exerting efforts to change this social perception, often in the field of art. Artists like ORLAN, Alana Francis, and Genesis P-Orridge create and perform artworks to communicate their concepts.¹⁷ An American Asian artist, Ji Yeo, portrays the irony of our society regarding the perception of beauty through artworks that interact with audiences. Ji Yeo's work in Brooklyn, New York 2010, where she wore a nude suit, while holding a sign asking people "*I want to be perfect. Draw on me. Where should I get plastic surgery?*"¹⁸ This participatory artwork drew completely opposite results compared to the reality we are experiencing every day; the answers written on her body were "*You already are perfect*" and "*Not here.*"¹⁹ Unlike what seems to be dominant

in popular culture and society, generally people with better appearance receive greater benefits. People's responses to Ji Yeo's work sent a clear message that she does not need cosmetic surgery. This result emphasizes and contradicts the social issues surrounding extreme standards of beauty today and reminds us of the tacit reassurances we experience in the presence of the body and skin. This raises questions surrounding the shift of such ideal beauty standards in the presence of the body and in the face of people in vulnerable states, and as well challenges societies pretentiousness in those participatory situations.

As strong desire of 'belongingness' results in the practice of extreme physical reformation, which is tacitly encouraged by society where people whose appearance conforms to the beauty standards receive more opportunities, benefits and perhaps get better chances in almost everything. My Project tackles this issue in form of an interactive installation artwork.

The desire of belongingness is portrayed on the wire sculptures, in the forms of surgical tools and body parts. Surgical tools are built to represent the surgery while the

¹⁷ (Frizzell, 2015)

¹⁸ (Trish, n.d.)

¹⁹ (Administrators, 2018)





overall installation indirectly symbolizes the procedure of surgery. Body parts are selected according to the collection of online surveys to help determine the most desired body parts in plastic surgery. Some parts, such as jaws, are very dangerous to modify with surgery (sometimes causing severe side effects, and in worst case death); however, it is still one of the most favored parts to be re-formed especially in south east Asian countries such as South Korea. The nose is one of the most popular parts to be re-formed both in the western and eastern world. Westerners tend to straighten their noses, while in the East they often intend to make it higher.²⁰ As most of the patients of the plastic surgery are women, augmentation of breasts and hips is very favored as well.

For the slime component of this work, I have created a skin-like substance; moreover, it is soft and fluffy. The texture of the slime recalls the texture of silicon which are frequently used in plastic surgeries. The

²⁰ (Leem, S. Y., *Gangnam-Style Plastic Surgery: The Science of Westernized Beauty in South Korea*, 2017). & (SeulHye, 2017)



wire sculpture is suspended in the air by wires to make spaces available for slimes to fall. Moreover, as mentioned above, these slimes will cause further interaction with mirror on the pedestal, which are built to hold together the slime and also to reflect the whole sculpture. The mirrors are intentionally cut and pasted like a mosaic which symbolize the common idea derived from literature; mirrors are often described to be broken when an ugly figure is reflected. In this installation, the wire sculpture is the ugly figure with unstable and falling parts for it projects the failure of plastic surgery. Eventually, the reflection of this sculpture will provide the audience with a new perspective and lead to the act of picture taking. People today often unconsciously take out their phone to take selfies, and this act of picture taking makes another perspective of the work, and it even moves out of the gallery with the audience to create further interactions through social medias.



Lastly recreation of advertisements on the wall are the projection of reality. In each picture, there is a girl and her reflection on the mirror. The reflected face symbolizes the desired look of that person fit in to the beauty standard of the society. while on the other hand, the real face represents the reality of our face we tend to miss after the plastic surgery. pursuing after the beauty standards of the society we often go under surgeries to reform ourselves to fit in among other people. However, we often cannot see how these radical surgeries are truly changing us, and overly re-forming ourselves. As seen in the image, even the reflection is unnatural and strange. This ignorance and greed to achieve socially-acknowledged beauty leads to the loss of our true and natural beauty, creating a whole new unnatural and overly exaggerated creature.





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Farah Alaa Ibrahim

PAN-PSYCHĒ

Video projection on pottery

Everything, living or not, is constituted from elements having a nature that is both physical and nonphysical-that is, capable of combining into mental wholes.

- Thomas Nagel

An abundance of distinct psychic beings or minds constitute reality. If human consciousness emerged through an evolutionary process, then all other physical material must already contain some basic forms of mental being.

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Panpsychism: Do Intrinsic Natures Exist?

Panpsychism, as defined by Oxford Dictionary, is the philosophical doctrine that all matter, regardless of its size, has an element of individual consciousness. The term panpsychism originates from two Greek words: pan (all) and psychē (soul). “We encounter in nature other entities of intrinsic value, rather than objects to be manipulated for our gain.”¹ The argument of intrinsic natures asserts that if human consciousness emerged through an evolutionary process, then all other physical matter must already contain some basic form of mental being; that is panpsychism.² It can be understood as the claim that

mentality can be attributed to all natural forms (Clarke, 2018, 2). Panpsychism asserts that reality is constituted by an abundance of distinct psychic beings or minds. The purpose of this research is not advocating nor belittling the panpsychist view; it is a series of trials and reflections on understanding the world around me including notions such as materiality, mentality, and consciousness, and how all these relate to myself as an animate being in my interactions with the non-animate.

Investigating this concept was initiated by an interest in geology; inciting the question where does geology and consciousness meet? Generally, my work involves looking into systems and structures, which led to my curiosity regarding the structure of geological rock formations and how they relate to humans. The concept of panpsychism analyses this relationship,

¹ “On Panpsychism.” Footnotes to Plato, 26 Sept. 2016, platofootnote.wordpress.com/2016/09/20/on-panpsychism/. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

² Et al.



Woo, 2003, Tony Oursler. fiberglass sculpture, master cassette tape, 2 DVD discs, Sony VPL DVD player and projector. 83.8 x 88.9 x 40.6 cm. (33 x 35 x 16 in.)





relating to all matter, animate and inanimate; from rocks to consciousness. The concept “panpsychism” also connects to Islam as all matter is believed to “praise God.”

“Materiality”, “Mentality”, and “Consciousness” must be defined as they are related to this discussion. The dictionary definition of “materiality” is the quality of being composed of matter; that is physical substance in general. “The notion of a thing, materiality, was something that I think was something very in peoples’ minds when they were dealing with earth, and metal and different kinds of metals, and the interaction of different sorts of material” asserts the American artist Robert Barry who has produced several non-material “invisible” artworks using media such as telepathy, radio waves, invisible gases, and words (Artnet Worldwide Corporation). “Mentality” is described by the Oxford Dictionary as the capacity for intelligent thought, while “Consciousness” is the

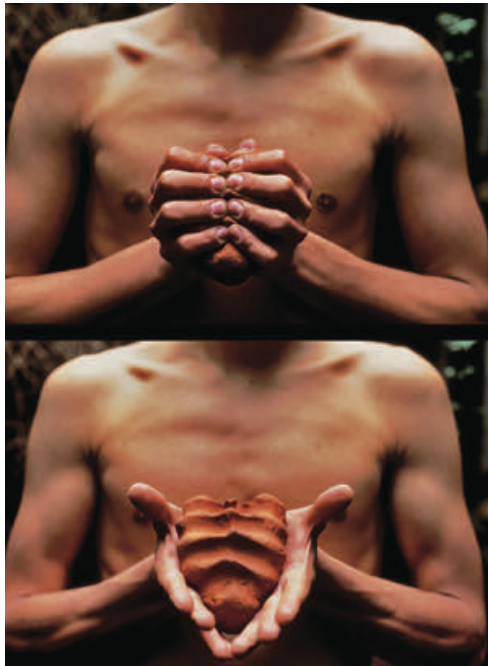
function of the human mind that receives, and processes information then stores or rejects it. This is done with the help of the senses, the ability of reasoning, imagination, emotion, and memory (Vithoukias, 2014). According to Clarke, in Panpsychism and the Religious Attitude the term “Mentality” is more accurate than “Consciousness” in the panpsychist theory; “Mentality” is the “capacity within certain bodies lacking sense receptors for a type of proto-experiencing with a qualitative aspect, while consciousness applies to having sensations, and awareness” (Clarke, 2003,2).

The thought-provoking notion of panpsychism has been an issue of controversy for decades. The argument of intrinsic natures, mentioned above, dates to the seventeenth century work of Spinoza, and Leibniz which assert that Nature possesses two attributes: mind (thought), and matter (extension).³ “The physical world is only known as regards certain abstract features of its space-time structure – features which, because of their abstractness, do not suffice to show whether the world is, or is not, different in intrinsic character from the world of mind.” (Russell, 1948, 240). In his work *The Ethics*, Spinoza, a Dutch philosopher, suggested that every object has a corresponding idea. Thereby, every object has a mind. This is most apparent in the case of humans where the object is the human body, and the mind is its corresponding idea. Nevertheless, it is a general ontological principle that is believed to apply to all things (Skrbina). Leibniz, a German rationalist philosopher, mathematician, and logician, interprets panpsychism based on his *Monadology*; the science of monads that are the simple, indivisible constituents of reality. He asserted that there are two primary qualities that constitute the structure of the monad,



Still from Scenes From a House Dream, 2010, David Hoffos. Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA), September 10-31 December 2010. Image from viewoncanadianart.com

³ “On Panpsychism.” Footnotes to Plato, 26 Sept. 2016, platofootnote.wordpress.com/2016/09/20/on-panpsychism/. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.



My Hands Are My Heart, 1991, Gabriel Orozco. Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/ Paris.

these are perception, and appetite. “I found that [the monad’s] nature consists in force, and that from this there follows something analogous to sensation [that is, perception] and appetite, so that we must conceive of them on the model of the notion we have of souls...[W]e see that there is a world of creatures, of living beings, of animals, of entelechies, of souls in the least part of matter” (Leibniz, 1989).

The notion that non-living beings have consciousness is not only philosophical as suggested by the works of Spinoza, and Leibniz, some Mahayana monks assert that non-sentient beings such as plants, and stones have buddha-nature (“Soul”). Buddha Nature is a complex term often used by Mahayana Buddhism; the Tibetan teacher Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche described Buddha Nature as:

“our fundamental nature of mind is a luminous expanse of awareness that is

beyond all conceptual fabrication, and completely free from the movement of thoughts. It is the union of emptiness, and clarity, of space, and radiant awareness that is endowed with supreme, and immeasurable qualities. From this basic nature of emptiness everything is expressed; from this everything arises, and manifests.” (O’Brien, 2018).

Buddha Nature is believed to be something we are- not something we have- together with all beings; living, and non-living.

Part of Buddhist beliefs is maintaining balance, harmony between humankind, and Nature. Ancient Chinese artists during the Tang, and Song Dynasties (618-907 AD and 960-1279 AD) “sought to capture expressive rhythms of nature, and spiritual harmony” through landscape painting (Joffe, 2016). Concurrently, artists, and scholars began using unusual large stones created by the forces of nature to decorate their gardens. These rocks, despite their large size, were thought of as miniatures of natural landscapes. Some of these stones were referenced as Gongshi “Spirit Stones” or scholar’s rocks.⁴ Scholars studied, and meditated on these stones which inspired poems, literature, calligraphy, and painting. Gongshi became regarded as natural works of art that connected viewers to a deeper, and more creative understanding of the natural world. Later, Gongshi was regarded with much more complexity; where thinness, openness, perforations, and wrinkling are four important qualities which were recognized in the rocks.⁵ Such stones were given names, and admired for their personality, and character manifested in their various shapes, and textures. Gongshi “had consciousness attributed to them, and actually came to be venerated”(Joffe). Not only do they represent a connection

⁴ “The World of Scholars’ Rocks Gardens, Studios, and Paintings”, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000. <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2000/world-of-scholars>. Accessed 5 Dec. 2018.

⁵ Et al



Continuerà a crescere tranne che in quel punto (It Will Continue to Grow Except at That Point), 1968, Giuseppe Penone. Bronze and tree, bronze, 15 3/4 x 3 7/8 x 5 1/8 in. (40 x 10 x 13 cm). Private Collection. Photo © Archivio Penone. Image courtesy Nasher Sculpture Centre.

to nature, Gongshi also are thought of as “monuments of inner thought” (Joffe, 2016). Something beyond the physical object; an element more profound, and extra ordinary is thought to be present in these stones.

Ryōan-ji (The Temple of the Dragon at Peace) is yet another manifestation of the relationship between geology and consciousness. Ryōan-ji is Japan’s most renowned rock garden, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site created in 1499 (Mehta). It consists of a Zen Buddhist temple along with low earthen walls surrounding a rectangular plot of pebbles, with 15 rocks laid out in small groups on patches of moss. From any vantage point, at least one of the 15 rocks is always hidden from the viewer.⁶ This garden has often bedazzled, and confused visitors due to the mysterious message the rock

garden seeks to convey. Or whether there is a message to begin with. This resulted in many unique interpretations, and visualizations including musical notations, mathematical equations, abstract art, and many more possible ways of viewing the Ryōan-ji stones.⁷ One of the musical notation interpretations is the Ryoanji Score by John Cage; an ecologically based musical work, and transmediation of the Japanese Ryōan-ji garden. The score was done through considering the sounds emanating from the garden itself (Fowler, 2014). A common interpretation is that the rocks in the garden represent “islands of consciousness in a sea of emptiness.”⁸

⁷ “Counting the Stones at Ryoanji Zen Temple.” Kyo Tours Japan, 17 Dec. 2016, www.kyotoursjapan.com/blog/2016/12/17/counting-the-stones-at-ryoanji-zen-temple. Accessed 10 Dec. 2018.

⁸ AdelaideBen. “Ryoan-Ji - The Mystery of the Stones Lies Within.” Japanese Ties, Blogger, 26 June 2010, japaneseties.blogspot.com/2010/06/ryoanji-mystery-of-stones-lies-within.html. Accessed 10 Dec. 2018.

⁶ “Ryoanji Temple • Temple in Kyoto.” Japan Guide, www.japan-guide.com/e/e3909.html. Accessed 10 Dec. 2018.



Cage's work was basically recording the sounds of these "islands of consciousness" through an modern musical composition.

As part of this research, I have been looking at several artworks exploring human consciousness in a number of ways. Tony Oursler, a contemporary American multimedia and installation artist, is particularly interesting in his material and methodological approach; projecting humanoid forms on sculptural pieces (see appendix 1). Oursler's work allows the audience to "think about things that aren't there, and make them concrete, using an associative quality that's super poetic to read objects in multiple ways." (McCormick, 2000). I find what Oursler does considerably connected to the panpsychist view, as it is projecting an element of the mind, and humanoid forms onto bodies- non-human bodies; the distorted figure is connected to non-animate objects. David Hoffos is another artist who uses projections to explore human consciousness. His project "Scenes from a House Dream" has projected characters, and vehicles that move through each scene, repeating recurring ordinary tasks (see appendix 2). It is these mundane tasks that somehow take the viewer into a magical realm of being, and consciousness.

Another dimension explored is the intersection between ceramics, sculpture, and performance; namely the relationship between time, motion, and space. This led to examining works by Gabriel Orozco, Giuseppe Penone, Maurizio Cattelan, and Constantin Brancusi along with others. In a sense most of their works capture a certain movement or fragment of the human body. Orozco's "My Hands Are My Heart" (see appendix 3) manifests the relationship between physicality, and the performative act of creating and shaping clay. Penone integrated his body with the growth pattern of the forrest in his work *Continuerà a Crescere Tranne Che In Quel Punto* "It Will Continue to Grow Except at

That Point"(see appendix 4). In this series of sculptural works where copper hands are gripping a living tree, Penone examines the relationship between the human body, nature (space), and time. The element that I relate to in some of the works of Cattelan, and Brancusi is the simplification of the human characteristic into simpler forms (see appendices 5 and 6).

The panpsychist view, suggests a novel approach to my interaction with the surrounding environment. As discussed, there are numerous proposals regarding panpsychism, from philosophical, to religious, and geological. Nevertheless, I do not have a concrete position regarding the notion up to the present time. Does the keyboard on which I am typing at the moment feel or think what is happening to it? These questions remain unanswered for me. "Feeling" also implicates the senses,



Bird in Space, 1928, Constantin Brancusi. Bronze, 54 x 8 1/2 x 6 1/2" (137.2 x 21.6 x 16.5 cm). Photo © Succession Brancusi - All rights reserved (ARS) 2018.



and notions of sympathy and empathy, however, these are out of the scope of this paper as they require a discussion on their own. "Everything, living or not, is constituted from elements having a nature that is both physical and nonphysical—that is, capable of combining into mental wholes. So this reductive account can also be described as a form of panpsychism: all the elements of the physical world are also menta"(Nagel, 2012). The intersection between geology, and consciousness, which constitutes a substantial portion of this discussion is distinctly compelling for me. The juxtaposition of something that is physical and tangible with another unembodied, and intangible object proposes a work with two elements; one that is excessively material, and a second non-material medium. My work will continue to further explore this concept through trials, and material experimentation contemplating the imaginative, and artistic paths the panpsychist view can take me.

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Hadya Younis
**Secrets for
the Mad**

Multi-media installation
(sound and video)

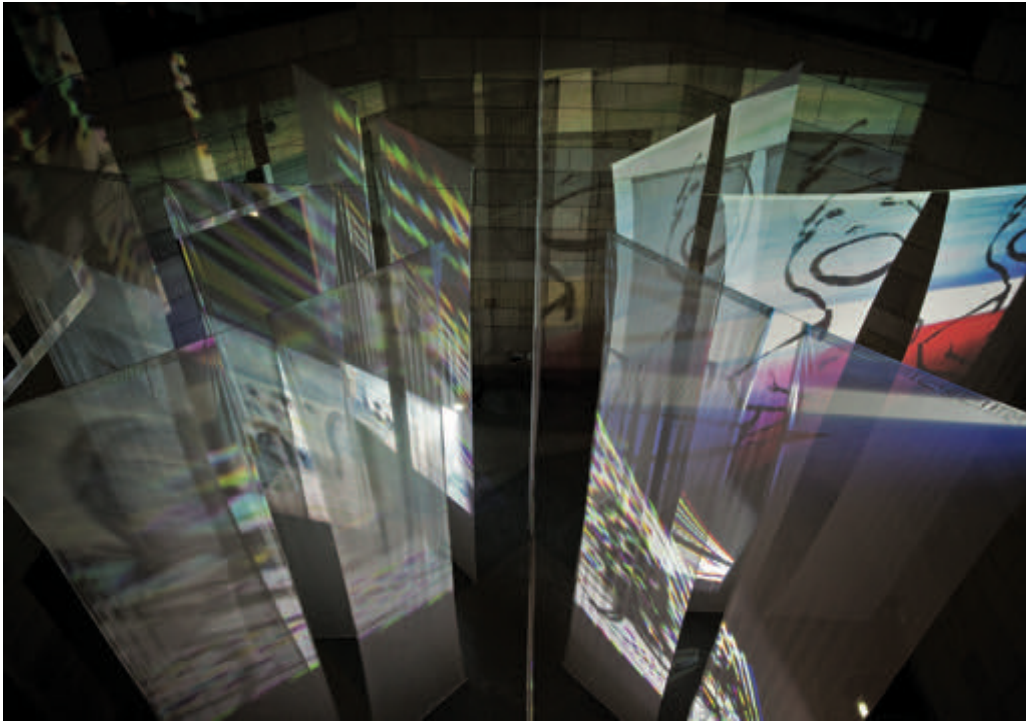
"I am under no obligation to make sense to you."

-The Hatter

CONTACT

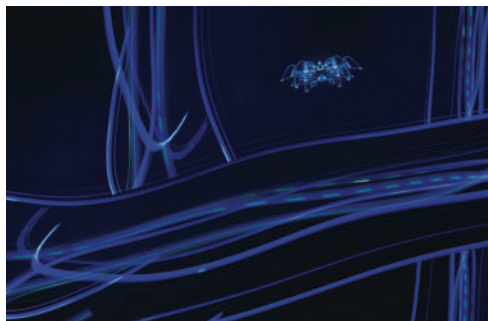
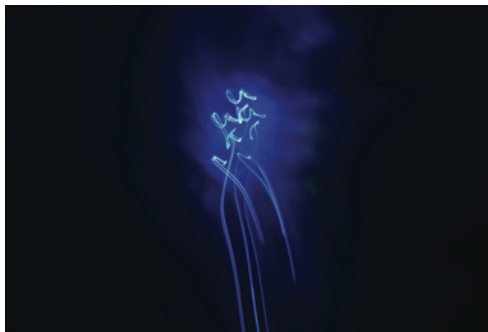
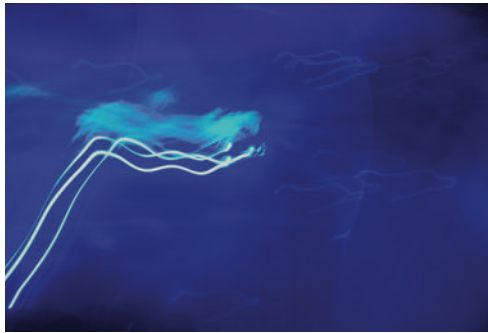
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Mind Palace, Hadya Younis, abstract photography, 2016

Introduction

The mind is the set of mental faculties, the element of a being that allows awareness of the world and its experiences. The cognitive faculties include memory, perception, thinking and consciousness. Unlike the brain, the mind is intangible; it cannot be seen or localized; it is capable of both imagination and recognition. My project is an attempt to make a bit of sense of what the mind holds, in particular my own. This paper sheds a light on the method of Loci, the concept of mind palaces and how they work. After that, it discusses the development of the method's uses, followed by a differentiation between the original method and the one I will be exploring in my project. In addition, the paper explains the importance of sound in the project. Lastly, it describes how my ideas are going to be translated into an artwork.

The Method of Loci

The idea of my project is inspired by the concept of the mind palace, also known as a memory palace; a space one creates or imagines in their mind, where specific information is stored and later retrieved through journeying to that specific place in the same order every time. This place can be in any form; it can be a house, a bedroom or the set of a film. There are no rules but one: for the person to be completely familiar with the place they are using. This concept is based on The Method of Loci (Loci, Latin for place) which is an ancient method of memorization that was used by Greeks and Romans (Yates). "The process of its technique, mnemonics, was understood to the ancient world as being a system of artificial memory introduced to Western philosophy in aid of improving recollection" (Wilson 2). In Medieval times, people who were illiterate learned instead by constructing a building in their minds, and placing within its rooms things and connecting those to the ideas they have learned (Fisher 8). One who desires to learn



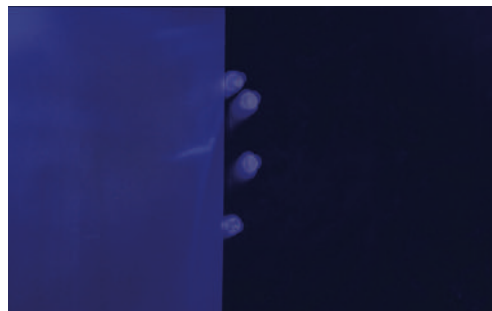
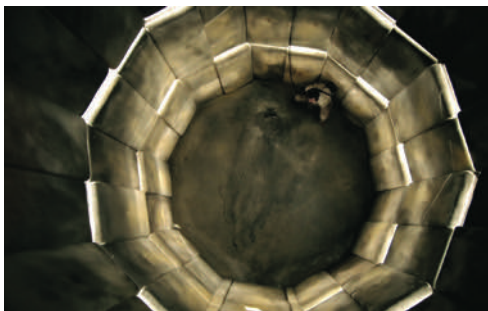


the technique of Loci must choose places in one's palace and store images in an organized manner of the things they want to remember, so that when they come to retrieve them, those images will present themselves to the person (Yates 2). How some minds are capable of doing this is fascinating, but in some cases, the mind is not easy to venture through, rather, more hazy and abstract. My mind is one of those cases.

Development of Mind Palaces

The method of Loci was the very beginning of the concept of the mind/memory palace. However, with time, it started to expand to more than a memorization technique, rather, every person made their own version of the mind palace concept. Such as the character of Dr Hannibal Lecter, from the adapted TV show Hannibal of Thomas Harris' book series; which follows the story of the relationship between Will Graham, an FBI profiler and Hannibal Lecter, a serial

killer, who also happens to be a psychiatrist. Lecter extends the use of his mind palace to more than a memorization method; he uses it as an escape from his surroundings and a safe haven made of his imagination and memories (Bull 332). Another example from the show is the psychotherapy sessions between Graham and Lecter. Considering that Graham was behind bars, they were meeting in either Graham's mind palace or Dr Lecter's, instead of Dr. Lecter's office (Fuller). "This palace is not only a mental system through which Lecter stores information, but also a place of refuge" (Schmis 391). Another TV show that explores its own version of the concept of mind palaces is BBC's Sherlock. Sherlock Holmes is a private detective known for his brilliant talent of solving crimes and mysteries with boldness. Holmes does not use his mind palace in the classic way of only retrieving information. When trying to solve a case, instead of using only forensic analysis, Holmes does not only retrieve the mass of information and observations from



Top: Still, Hannibal
Bottom: Still, Sherlock S03E03

Top: Untitled, Hadya Younis, Photography with digital manipulation, 2016
Bottom: Photography Experimentation, Hadya Younis, 2016





Still, *Inside Out*, Animation Motion Picture, Disney Pixar, 2015

his palace, but he also analyzes them there, using his imaginative, creative and perhaps even bizarre interpretations to solve the crime at hand (Bull 331).

Implicit and Explicit Mind Palaces

While the concept of the mind/memory palace focuses on the ability of storing and retrieving information consciously, my mind palace is an attempt of visualizing unconscious storing and retrieval of information. The experiences recorded in our memories from the past largely influence our mental and physical activities. In my case, these activities include the decisions and execution of my past artwork in addition to the way I choose to represent those in my current project. The difference between the original Loci method and the method I am using in my project is explained in the fact that we have two types of memories: implicit and explicit. The Loci method uses explicit memory, which includes the recording and recollection of information consciously. However, in my method, I am using implicit memory.

This type of memory does not record and recollect information consciously, rather, unconsciously, hence my choice to include my past work (Tsushima 1).

Sound

Sound is a series of vibrations that travel through air and other mediums, and is perceived by the sense of hearing (Oxford Dictionaries). It is quite powerful in its effects; it has the ability to produce reactions that are unlike other senses; the sound of a snake's hiss can send an uncomfortable shivering sensation throughout the body. Just like visual stimulus is capable of triggering past events in our minds; sound can also remind us of past situations (Leeds 30). Therefore, our memories are associated with sound in the same manner as they are associated with visual information. We use our sound memories always; from something as simple as recognizing voices of the people we know to having a panic attack, because a certain sound triggered a horrible memory.



Reflection, Refraction, Projection Exhibition, Ela Boyd, 2011

Sound shapes our experience of reality in plenty of ways and I want to integrate that into my project by choosing specific audio pieces that the audience can experience.

Presentation

My project is an installation of mixed media using translucent fabric for layering imagery, in addition to using multiple speakers to play audio. Both of which will include my recent past and distant past combined. Using previous artworks of mine done in the last few years, mixed together, is an exploration of the relations my mind creates with the information in its palace, without my awareness of the procedure. The method of Luci is about order, my method is about chaos, and how that chaos inside of my mind affects my choices and creations.

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Hanya Elghamry

CONFABULATION

Mixed media installation

Take a million water pots
and you will find the sun in each of them;
but there is only one sun.

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Top: No Muerden, Nevena Kostic, Painting, 1988
Bottom: Detail of tree trunk, photography by artist

Confabulated Metamorphosis: A fake memory leading to half a transformation

Absolute spirit is the primary structure of reality, and everything that exists is its actualization (Hegel). Everything is connected to it, it creates the thinking and being, subject and object, the real and ideal and the human and divine. The Indian Sages invented the allegory of the water pots in the sun. Take a million water pots divided and you'll find the sun in each of them, but there is only one sun. Take a billion people, they all have consciousness but there is only one consciousness. Consciousness literally means knowing together, wouldn't that suggest that we all have collective memory? A memory that triggers mutations and a collective evolution of consciousness, a human metamorphosis. Metamorphosis is the process of transformation, often referred to as the change of an immature insect to an adult insect with implications of the changes occurring in our life span. We all experience similar yearnings, emotions, and tribulations that reflect the various transformations that are inevitable along the way.

Memory is also the sum of parts, without one it would not be complete. There is the implicit memory that does not require conscious awareness, while the explicit memory does and it is divided between semantic and episodic (Brown et al). The main focus is the highest form of memory, the one that is most subjected to disturbances, referred to as episodic memory. It allows us to travel back in time, to relive moments and bring eventful history to the present. It relates to our knowledge of who we were, are and who we could become. The memories we gather could further be divided into three categories, lifetime periods, general events and event specific knowledge (McLeod). Lifetime periods are memories of a specific time spent in your life, such as events in a relationship or years in the university. These memories tend to be very clear at the





Pixelated Pornographic Landscape Tiles, Tobias Rehberger, Art Basel Miami Beach, 2015

beginning and the end, but are hazy in the middle. While general events are much more focused, often one memory attaches to a train of related memories. Normally, they revolve around the person's achievements or lack of. It regards the individual's sense of self, and their memory of how good they are at doing something.

Finally, event specific knowledge are vivid reminders of what had happened (McLeod). Initially, they have high levels of details but fade quickly while specific ones stand out; such as originating events, turning points, situations that strengthened the individual's beliefs and goals, or something that happened in the past that dictates the future. These are made of sensory-perceptual features that distinguish memories of reality (McLeod), from a collection of things that only exist because of the formation of events that occurred only in our minds and imagination. They mostly appear out of nowhere, unlike general events and lifetime periods that are thoroughly thought of.

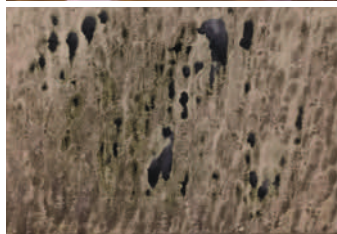
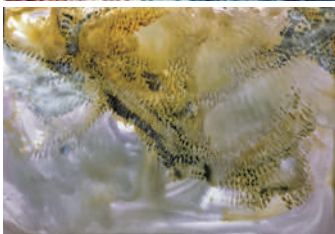
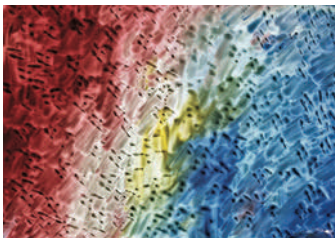
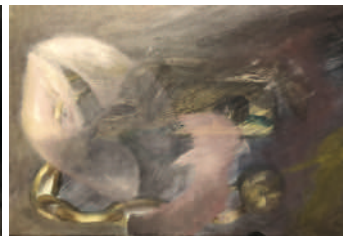
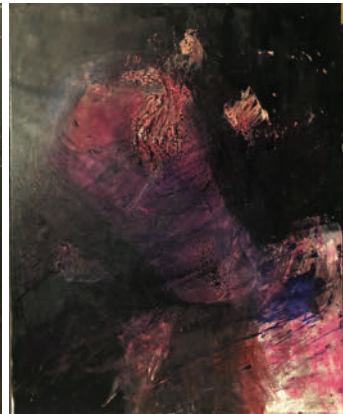
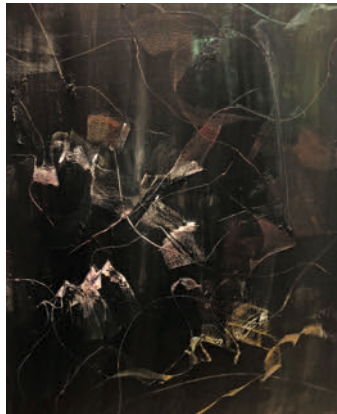
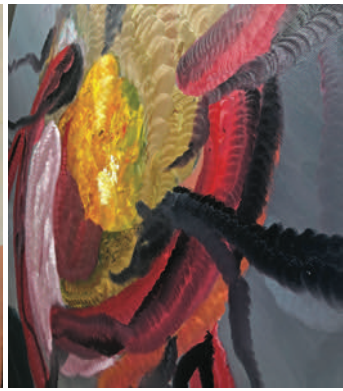
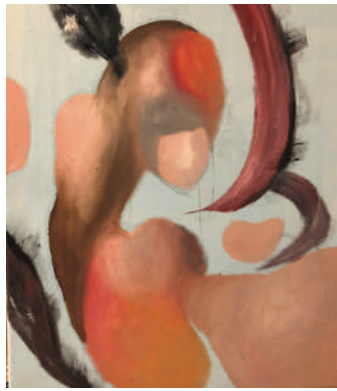
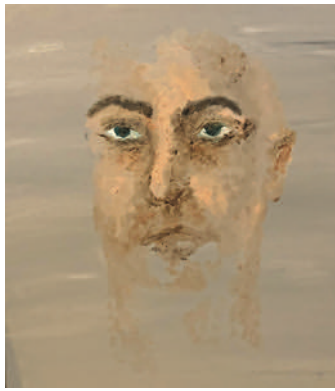
The episodic autobiographical memories are the ones that trigger us to embark on the journey of metamorphosis, but what

makes this process painful is forging unity out of the polarity. An internal battle filled with conscious awareness, and the control of the persona that fights hard to maintain its habitual ways of living, fighting against the transformation that is inevitable to occur for evolution. The vividness and specificity of the episodic memory, of a particular time and place, have led researchers to characterize episodic memory as time travel, known as auto-noetic consciousness (Conway). The highly detailed sensory perceptual knowledge integrates the autobiographical knowledge, representing the experienced self. The time travelling occurs when the autobiographical knowledge gains access to the associated episodic memories, providing a platform for the workings of metamorphosis, and our conscious transformation.

But what if my memory is a false one, or something that is not actually remembered but is so vividly constructed in the brain with various details and possibilities that it becomes real. My brain has created its own sensory perceptual knowledge, aiding to my remembering of an event that I was not old enough to be aware of. But maybe my consciousness is aware of it, and maybe it is there, but not accessed by my brain. The amount of childhood memories a person can recall depends on the emotion associated with the event, the age at that time of the event, and the age they were asked to recall the memory (Bauer). People assume that the inability to recall a memory means they have forgotten about it, but the reality is that there is a difference between availability and accessibility. Other research suggested that nothing can be remembered before the age of 3, and segments that are obtained cannot be indicative of genuine episodic memory (Bauer).

I have a scar on my shoulders that I am not sure how I got, but my parents are aware of that memory, as it is extremely painful for them to remember. I believe I have a







knowledge of how I got that scar, and I believe that my consciousness is aware of the unavailable memory that I can't recall consciously in details. This scar has caused me to transform, to become what I am, something that has led to consequences in the future in my brain, my body and my identity.

Metamorphosis marks a situation of a personal crisis, showing a lasting change, something that is irreversible. The skin forges into something new to adapt to the changes that have occurred, and the external factors that were inflicted on it. Changing the course of how the skin renews itself, and how it matures to its final form, ensuring its survival. During metamorphosis hormones activate developmental processes, to prepare the body for its new mode of existence. In "Retention of Memory through Metamorphosis: Can a Moth Remember what it learned as a caterpillar?" The authors stated the phases in which the caterpillar goes through to transition into a butterfly. The same transition could be referred to in the spiritual transitioning of human metamorphosis. Phase one is dissolving, of everything that ever clearly identified who you are. The second phase is reordering and reimagining, where your exterior situation and your interior rebirth start to reflect one another. The third stage is where implementation occurs, where external transformations mature and settle, creating complex forms and shapes.

Through painting and mixed media, I will embark on the experiment to visualize the process of metamorphosis when recalling episodic memories. Forging the polarity between actual memories, false memories and the transformation of the consciousness, the brain and the body. Through detailed paintings of the transition, and faded portrayal of the memories, I hope the viewer would recall their own episodic memories that led to their current metamorphosed state.

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Joumana
El Soufani

CACTUS

Installation

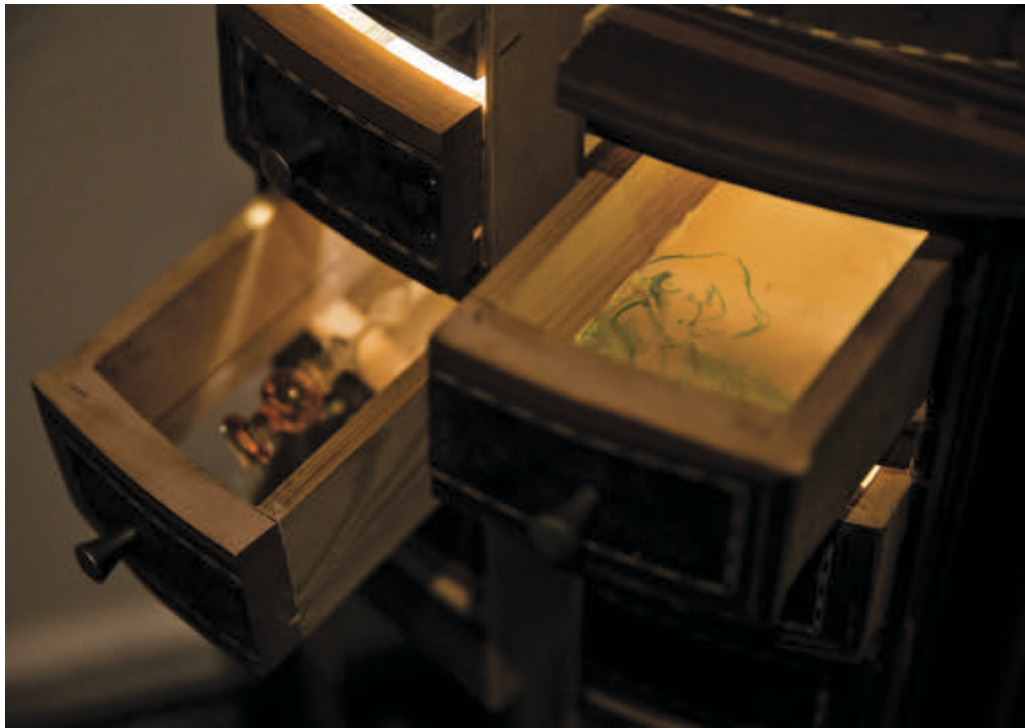
*The castle with the dormant princess is
protected by intricate rose bushes with thorns
so sharp that no one can go beyond them
without getting marked...*

- Sleeping Beauty

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Sex in Islam

Sex - is it sacred, divine, Holy, Addictive? Does it degrade our morals; unleash our animal instincts, threaten our intellect and our ability to act morally? Why don't we know? Why have our parents taught us everything but this? Is it because they themselves don't know enough? Have their parents neglected this topic too? The Quran has placed so much weight on acquiring knowledge, so why don't we talk about sex and the knowledge offered by the Quran itself?

In the days of Prophet Muhammad, Muslim men and women were never too shy to ask questions including those related to private affairs such as sexual life. God, who cares for all aspects of our life, discusses reproduction, creation, family life, menstruation and even ejaculation in the Quran. Prophet Muhammad, who was sent to us as an example to emulate, discussed many aspects of sexual life including sexual positions and foreplay with his Companions.

The rules and regulations of marriage and premarital intercourse in Islam are straightforward, but hard to follow due to the intrinsic details mapped out by God, Prophet Mohamed and the Caliphates. Every sexual act comes with a label; Makrouh are acts which are discouraged, Haram are acts which are forbidden and Mostahab are acts which are encouraged. Engaging in sexual intercourse under the sky or while standing are examples or Makrouh acts. Masturbation and homosexuality are examples of Haram acts. And having sexual intercourse with your wife when you're attracted to another woman is an example of an act that is Mostahab.

Through these categorizes emerges the concept of Zina; a violation in sexual conduct according to Islam and is considered a capital sin. The only way to have a Halal





The First Mourning, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, oil on canvas, by. 203 × 252 cm, 1888

(lawful) sexual life is through el Ihsan. Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, a Tunisian scholar, sociologist and islamologist described in his book *Sexuality in Islam*, that the Muhsana is the person who is legally married (Nikah) and is sexually exclusive with their spouse. Any sexual conduct outside of that realm is considered Zina. The Islamic solutions to fulfilling our sexual urges are marriage, temporary abstinence, or temporary marriage (Mut'a). Temporary marriage is when a person who finds it difficult to control his or her sexual desire, enters into a marriage with a pre-determined timeframe that is namely for pleasure (the meaning of the Arabic word Mut'a). Mut'a is considered fraudulent or morally problematic within modern Islamic cultures due to its secrecy and temporality. Mut'a should, like normal marriage, should be publicized and everyone should be aware of the marriage.

People now abuse this lawful act and transform it into an illegitimate or Haram act. The consequences of engaging in any sexual act beyond these three options are laid out by Bouhdiba as they were written in the Quran. The harshest punishment would be stoning to death, which is the fate of a married person having sexual intercourse with another married person who is not their lawful Islamic spouse. Bouhdiba goes on to contextualize sexuality in the Islamic tradition and how it connects to religious faith.

The Quran and the Sunna - sayings by the Prophet Muhammed and his companions - have mentioned topics such as foreplay and sexual etiquette between a man and his wife. Al-Islam.org, a registered Non-Profit Organization created and maintained by the Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library





Project (DILP) present information derived from books of authentic narrations between the Prophets and his companions. It is narrated from the viewpoint of the Prophet: "Do not engage in sexual intercourse with your wife like hens; rather, firstly engage in foreplay with your wife and flirt with her and then make love to her." Furthermore, the narration explains: "All play and games are futile except for three: Horse riding, archery and foreplay with your wife, and these three are correct." Moreover, there are some restrictions, even between a man and his wife. The use of foreign objects, for example is Makruh, whilst anal sex is completely forbidden, Haram. Having a Quran or anything holy next you while having sex is also Haram. Making love standing, making love bare, making love under the sky, making love when someone is present in the house, making love with children around, making love on a boat, road or beach and facing or having one's back to the Qiblah (the direction of mecca faced while praying) are all haram sexual acts.

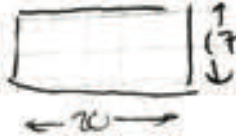
There are specific times a man is Mostahab to have sexual intercourse with his wife, and times where it is Makruh. Safwān bin Yahyā asked Imām al-Ridā : "A man has a young wife and hasn't come close to her for months, even a year. It is not because he wants to trouble her [by staying away], but rather a calamity has befallen them. Is this counted as a sin?" Imām replied: "If he leaves her for four months, it is counted as a sin." It is haram to have sex during menstruation and the holy month of Ramadan. Last but definitely not least, it is Makruh to have sexual intercourse in the state of Ihtilam (nocturnal emission), when travelling and there is a risk of no water, the night of lunar eclipse and day of solar eclipse, between the Fajr prayers and sunrise and between sunset until the redness of the sky has gone and at the time of an earthquake or any time that suggests prayer.

Everything you have read is factual based on the Islamic tradition, derived from the Quran and the Sunna. This is how Allah intertwined sexuality, religion and faith. The information we collect regarding anything, including religion, is not there for us to swallow without chewing. We have to question what we read, including the holiest of holy books. The Quran is considered to be timeless; what applies at the time of its inception is intended to be applicable today. For me, it is difficult read and understand, so I rely on parents, teachers, friends and Sheikhs' interpretations of the Quran. However, these are all merely interpretations. Interpretations will vary as our culture, knowledge and practices progress. If we can interpret one element differently today, why can't we do the same with everything else? How has the word become binding word; through the sheikhs, scientists, Imams, or can the public understanding shift? These are all questions I wish to answer through this project.

Eh el matloob men el mar2a fel islam -
 Look at Suret el Nesa2
 Eh 7e2o2ha fel gawaz
 Beet el ta3a
 Eh fekret el zena

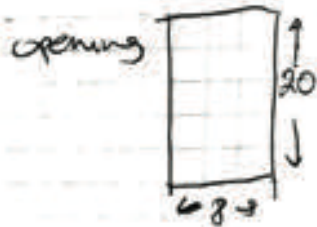


top view



LED lights allow to look like in surgery room

Right



drawer





Nada Wael
E /xit
/nter

Mixed media installation

As you go through life, you come to be greeted with its ocean of possibilities and misadventure. You may either let the waves carry you, or swim against the tide. We choose to swim because we think we're in control. But, should you choose to go against nature, you must suffer the consequences of the supernatural.

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On Gender Performance: A Timeline

Abstract

The concept of gender and what it means in an Egyptian context is not one that comes without contention. Communities built within cultures like ours do not understand or seek to understand the nuanced spectrum and variation of gender identity and how it comes to be. It was extremely frustrating to be forced to make peace with the fact that most of the people that I am surrounded by are uninformed about complexities surrounding gender and gender politics. Most people in an Egyptian context assume that gender is fixed and solid, a nonnegotiable factor in ones being that one has absolutely no control over. It's so easy for people to criticize others based on their gender performance and point out their choices as if they were some kind of misfortune, unaware of the fact that they themselves are in a constant performance of the self; they are unaware that they are making conscious and unconscious choices every single day to portray a certain image of gender. Although I am aware of and believe in the concept of gender performativity, I am unable to point out what exactly contributes to the creation of one's gender performance and how I could actually assess or analyze this undeniable aspect of one's being (here I would define what you mean exactly by gender performance).



Photography experimentations by Artist

Introduction

It is rather common to stumble upon grey in life. Grey is the most malleable, interchangeable and forgiving of colors. We welcome grey with its entire spectrum: cloud, smoke, ash and even graphite because wherever we walk in the chambers of life, there will be grey within sight. So, if we can accept a spectrum of grey as an





integral part of our lives, we can learn to apply such acceptance to gender as well. Gender, much like color, is a spectrum and we can learn to treat it as such. It is a spectrum that is properly shaded according to each individual's conscious and unconscious choices. For this project I have chosen to observe, through different lenses, how people perform their gender in hopes of further understanding of what constitutes a gender performance (be more specific here, how and who and why will you do such observations and what will you be looking to achieve through this).

In addition to an addiction to contradiction, there was a struggle for power but the power part was fiction (revise this sentence, not sure what you mean). There will always be a thirst and struggle for power whether it is the power of politics, fame and fortune, beauty, influence or leadership. These are all visible, tangible struggles but when these struggles encompass the intangible, it becomes more complex and nuanced. We're all fighting to achieve a power that might as well be fictitious, although it is anything but that. Gender is the struggle for power as we go, and performativity is the master of the puppet show. The economy, public discourse, and even the scientific theories are all fallen victims of performativity (what do you mean exactly by this trap of performativity, please clarify). In this paper, I have researched the different multitudes and possibilities of the fluctuations of gender identity and what they could possibly mean for women and girls in their lives.

The word "performance" is automatically associated with pop culture, the music industry, or musical theatre and stage performances. However it is used in this context more deliberately to go hand in hand with Marina Abramovich's "Rhythm 0", a pioneer in performance art, but of course it is impossible to relate it to oneself. Take myself for instance; I am a

normal, straight, Egyptian girl who studies Visual Arts and Anthropology. Like most girls, I enjoy wearing makeup, dressing up and gossiping. I was raised in accordance with culturally accepted values and social norms, never using foul language, sitting with my legs crossed and chewing like I have a secret. There's absolutely nothing special about me that would associate my behavior with performance. Let's stop for a minute, give me a round of applause and for I am the greatest of all performers; having fallen victim to gender performativity.

"I'm going to Yale to be a lesbian; a lesbian's what I've been for so long. How is it that I can both "be" one, and yet endeavor to be one at the same time?" (Judith Butler 1993). Judith Butler argues that you are not just simply your gender; you perform it. Once you identify yourself within a certain gender, you are "performing" everything that gender embodies. By admitting to a certain gender identity, you succumb into micro specific presuppositions and associations as to who or what you are (Judith Butler 1993). "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Judith Butler 1993). This quote by Butler is extremely crucial as it supports my initial proposition that gender identity, essentially, does not exist; it is a vicious cycle.

One's gender identity is constituted by the expressions one chooses to represent it, which are supposedly a result of the identity that one chooses to "identify" with. Everything else that identifies a person, seems to fall after gender identity. Since gender is always the main act in the play of life, other scenes don't seem to get much of the spotlight. The first thing that is pointed out about anyone is his or her gender; no one ever points out a job title or any kind of achievement. These achievements come in second place, and if there is a controversy over your gender, your achievements will





be overlooked (Judith Butler 1993). The catalyst of all evil when defining gender is performativity (revise the use of the word evil here, what are you trying to say). We are all born into an instruction manual that dictates everything that we are meant to “be” in accordance with “what” we “are”. In my research, I will explore the concept of performativity and how it plays a part in the fluctuation of gender identity before, during and after relationships.

Growing up and sustaining relationships, as a woman within an Egyptian context the cultural values and social norms surrounding gender identity is abundant. Many young Egyptian women and girls, as I myself have encountered, have been told the narrative that a woman wins a man is by using her weakness as a privileged strength. Young women and girls are encouraged to cry and sweet-talk their way through an argument in a relationship, because women are supposedly to be weak and submissive. For generations, mothers have instructed their daughters in the ways of dealing with men, by never yelling in an argument nor being assertive because those are not characteristics a girl should have nor is that a way a girl should behave. Women are told that because men will not accept it; we are essentially expected to perform what we were born to perform “All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players.” We’re all little marionettes in this grand performance on the stage of our lives.

In the play *A Doll’s House* by Henrik Ibsen, Nora, the main character goes through a very tough time when her husband falls sick. She has to take a very big loan in order to pay for her husband’s treatment. When her mother asks if she will ever tell Torvald, her husband, of the loan she took out to save his life, she says “Yes, some day, perhaps, after many years, when I am no longer as pretty as I am now. Don’t laugh at me! I mean of course, when Torvald is no longer







as devoted to me as he is now; when my dancing and dressing up and reciting have palled on him then it may be a good thing to have something in reserve.” Nora is taken as a product of her beauty, performativity and gender role. Everything that she does for her husband and everything that she is as a woman is seen as a given right; almost as if she is a slave or labor worker under an unforgiveable, cruel man. This is not a tale of poetic, metaphorical fiction; this is a fact.

In discussing the Political Economy of Sex, Gayle Rubin argues in favor of this concept. She argues women are considered the top example of labor workers, since everything they do is literally domestic labor. Women are expected to cook, clean, please others and give birth to a child just because they got married (Gayle Rubin 1975). They try going a mile to please their husbands like Nora did so that they would kind of have something to receive appraisal for in the future, as if what they’re offering is some sort of an illusion. Marriage is really no different from prostitution. When you’re a prostitute, you enter into a transaction whereby you submit to a man, give him all his desires and never complain; they both give the man the upper hand and the ability to have a woman at his mercy. If marriage is legal, why don’t all countries legalize prostitution? (consider revising this, exactly how is marriage and prostitution the same, marriage is a legally binding commitment to a spouse, prostitution is a transactional exchange of money and sex, revise this) At least then, women would avoid just a fraction of the abuse that they go through when it’s illegal (Gayle Rubin 1975). These concepts are not only problematic in theory but also prevalent within social and cultural practices, public discourses and deeply seeded values and beliefs within a conservative Egyptian society, where the serious and demeaning one’s words and actions have a negative impact on women.

“Discourses are practices that

systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 1975). The idea of women being submissive and men being dominant in discourse has been ever so prevalent. It happens on several occurrences where grammar fails us (or does it) and makes it so obvious. Let’s take a simple example: “Man fucks woman” This sentence automatically translates to subject, verb, and object (Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick 2003). Here, grammar has made woman the object in discourse; the subordination can be a bit subtle in the English language. In the Arabic language, however, it is an unavoidable catastrophe; where objects themselves are either male or female. In thinking about all the possible names of objects and which is female or male; it becomes significant that most of the objects were female. The irony of this isn’t the biggest problem. Most of the objects are female, and most of the female objects are demeaning, consumable or subordinate to a male object. Some examples would be Kobaya, Segara, Manfada, Segada, Gazma, Zebala, Ardeya and Sayara (please include the Arabic words also, followed by the English transliterations) . Even if we take something that is essential like paper, which translates to Waraqa, it is written on with a pen with translates to Qalam (include the Arabic word followed by the English transliteration). Even with one of the few positive examples we have, the male object is dominant and active while the female object is submissive and passive. Even discourse in daily language is feeding into the performativity of gender. For now, I believe it’s something worth thinking about.

Growing up female, the most recurrent stories we’ve been told were of princesses; spending almost an entirety of a lifetime in misery, leading aimless days of unproductivity until prince charming, the knight in shining armor, shows up somewhere in the storyline. The prince is always the one who comes to the rescue; the savior, either to wake up Sleeping





Beauty, bring Snow White back from the dead, save Cinderella from being a slave to her stepmother or to rescue Rapunzel from the tower and the witch. We don't realize the pattern until we grow up and realize what it all means. In the same way that the princes and the princesses are portrayed, so are the roles of the egg and the sperm. In describing the function of ovarian follicles in comparison to sperm "Far from being produced, as sperm are, they merely sit on the shelf, slowly degenerating and aging like overstocked inventory" (Emily Martin 1991). The eggs are portrayed as the passive, helpless, and needy being that is always waiting to be rescued by the strong, speedy, and precise sperm.

This subordination goes beyond Disney fairytales and permeates all aspects of cultural life. The most significant international designers are all men. Where ironically enough, women are expected to live up to their performance, which partly requires an interest in fashion, yet not be the ones who are recognized in the fashion industry? (not sure if this is the most significant example you could use to highlight your point, consider revising) The answer is that women are to men what nature is to culture (Sherry Ortner 1972). Women are perceived as wild, nature-loving creatures that simply can't be tamed. It also goes without saying that whatever is "natural" is probably also "irrational"; the nature of women's bodies and the fact that they bare children hinders them. Men, on the other hand must represent culture, indeed for they are the logical, wise and objective creatures that never cease to produce and feed the culture.



Nour Ashraf
Abdel Baky

DEATH TO ANTHOZOA

Multi-Media Installation

A stone, or plant? Corals have been called both when in fact they belong to the animal kingdom. This marine fauna is at the core of all sea and ocean-based ecosystems. With the eminent calamity threatening our world, global warming, they will be the first to go extinct. We as humans usually don't see a direct correlation between our actions and the life of these creatures, especially when we are not exposed to them on a regular basis. This work builds a bridge between humans and their negative effects on this specific life form.

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The Human Threat to Coral Extinction

Global Warming is currently one of the most eminent calamity threatening whole ecosystems worldwide. It is currently in a state of positive feedback where human actions are feeding into the exponentially increasing spiral without offering efficient solutions for solving or mitigating it. The way natural ecosystems function is that every part is in some way or another dependent on each other; humans cannot remove themselves from the equation, as they most probably would not survive for too long without the planet's natural resources. The ecological communities that are the most imminently affected today from global warming are mainly marine environments. As the water temperature increases, it changes the conditions that are habitable for its creatures. The first to go are the corals, and with their deaths comes the death of all those that take refuge in their habitat; slowly, small fish die off, followed by larger species, until eventually the environment becomes inhabitable for large mammals such as dolphins and whales. All this starts with the smallest and most misleading of animal species, the Corals themselves. These belong to the animal kingdom and have several prominent families, of which is the Dendrophylliidae family, which contains seven different genes, more than 90% of which are predicted to become extinct by the year 2050. This specific family is of the most vibrantly colored and liveliest species currently forming Coral reefs worldwide, they deserve to be protected just as much as that of the fauna of their environments, and change begins with raising awareness. My aim through this research and the artwork is to increase environmental awareness surrounding the dangers facing corals, with focus on the coral family Dendrophylliidae. In order to achieve this I aim to lift the barrier that naturally exists between the audience and this animal, that

which is ignorance towards the existence of this animal. I will attempt to do so by attempting to connect the individual observer to the danger threatening the animal.

Dendrophylliidae (Gk. dendron, tree; Gk. phyllon, leaf) are a subfamily of stony, or hard, corals. The animal itself, referred to as a 'polyp', settles on the sea bed and starts secreting a form of crystal-like calcium carbonate slowly building themselves a coenosteum, or skeleton. This is to protect their fragile small bodies that usually do not grow more than a few millimeters in length. They can also be either solitary or colonial, either appearing individually or gathering together forming one large common skeleton between them that can reach several meters in height and diameter. Though some species have a symbiotic relationship with photosynthesizing algae known as zooxanthellae, others consume through a fringed mouth that is protected and surrounded by tentacles. The individual species' colors derive from the color of the zooxanthellae which find home in their tissues, some of which even contain cnidocyte cells that sting when touched by another creature, and others are bioluminescent, causing the corals to glow bright colors. These animals have very primitive forms of neural, digestive, and reproductive systems; depending on the species they can reproduce either sexually or asexually. The basic neural systems, or neural-nets allow for the corals to respond to basic stimuli such as light, temperature, and basic chemical cues. Some of which can even develop locomotion during their life times. Most polyps can also detect certain chemicals such as sugars, the sensors they use is similar to that of taste or smell (Napoli, 1999).





Fig. 1: Lonhart, *Balanophyllia Elegans*, 2009, photograph



Fig. 2: Smithsonian Institute, *Skeleton of a Sun Coral*.





This specific family of corals occupies a wide variety of habitats, having a specific genus living in shallow waters, with another found more than one hundred and fifty meters below sea level. Some, such as the *Turbinaria*, occupies calm waters and clear sunlight in order to survive, while others, such as the *Balanophyllia* (fig.1), prefers dark caves with strong currents. Its habitats are as diverse as when someone discusses dogs, there are breeds such as the Saint Bernard who prefer extreme cold weathers, while others, for instance Labrador retrievers that prefer heat. But what urges humans to try and protect the ideal environment for dogs, while completely disregarding that for corals? Animals are separated into different categories on a scale determined by zoologists and biologists world wide. What dictates their position is mainly their adaptability to the changing environment around them (IUCN, 2001). These are the categories surrounding their cataloging:

Corals, as they are part of the animal kingdom, are also categorized on this spectrum. Due to the highly diverse nature of the different geneses within the *Dendrophylliidae*, each genus is independently categorized in accordance to its needs and how common it is. There is no official database made through history about corals underwater, as they have never been the biggest priority in comparison to large fauna on land and at sea, one of the most complete ones categorizes the major subdivisions of coral families, and was not updated since 2009 (Kleeman, 2009). As a result of this, it is unknown if the rate of extinction among these species were more recently or a result of natural rates of extinction over time.

There are three main perils that face corals whose survival is currently threatened: climate change, ocean acidification, and a decline in coral reef activity (Thomas and Brannet, 2009). All of which are results of human activity, such as sea pollution, which is exponentially increasing the rate of global

warming. Throughout history the Earth has periodically increased and decreased in temperature, going through climatic changes such as the ice ages (James and Roberts, 2016). The problem is that with the influence and impact of human life on the planet and its natural habitats, this increase is sped up, at such an accelerated rate that it doesn't give some species a chance to evolve to its changing environment and be able to withstand living warmer conditions. Instead species are dying from either direct interference, such as hunting, or from a secondary source, such as a prominent source of nourishment dying off from the food chain, or the introduction of invasive species to the environment (Thomas and Brannet, 2009).

I return to the question of why the mass public is more inclined to help larger fauna in their survival, almost completely disregarding the smaller ones? Could it be psychological? That a human is more likely to help a creature with eyes and a mouth as it relates it to its own personal form? Or it may generally have to do with our ability to understand the emotions of these creatures? After all we can tell a dog is joyous when it wags its tail, or that a cat is angry when it hisses; is that the barrier that prevents us from protecting marine environments; the inability to befriend a wild fish? Or to be able to know whether it is in pain simply because we do not understand their form of communication? This could be significant, especially with rather primitive species, such as corals, that do not necessarily have the most basic senses that humans possess, such as sight and sound. Just because one does not see an eye which communicates pain, it does not mean the animal does not feel it. Just like those you can befriend and relate to, all animals require our aid in the protection of their environment, especially when we are the reason for its distresses.

Corals like most other animals have a skeleton, whether it be indo- or exo-



, they still possess one (Napoli, 1999). The difference is when you find a coral's skeleton on the beach, take it home, and put it on display as a decorative element, it is not thought of as being eccentric, barbaric or shocking as seeing the bones of a horse on display. Another element that can be considered a contributing factor is the personal relationship or direct experience with an animal, if one sees live horses, later seeing their skeletons, would probably have a significant negative effect than if they never saw it.

The aim of this project is to spark empathy within the audience towards this small yet vibrant creature. The direction I am following is to help the audience visualize what previously seems abstract and far off thoughts. The intended audience would be those who are completely unaware of the underwater species and have never interacted with them. People that might even be completely oblivious to their existence altogether might perceive these coral species as a plant, or their skeletons as white rocks rather than what they truly are.

To achieve this I am producing a piece comprised of three main elements, a wall, a vitrine, and a projection. The first step is the wall, which represents number information in an abstract form, information such as the area of protected marine land in relation to the entire area of the Red sea. As well as the existent different species of corals in the Red Sea in comparison to that of the Caribbean, accentuating how many of those died in the recent past as a result of human activity. The second feature is the vitrine, which possesses found objects that my dive buddies and I personally collected while underwater, each of which are categorised with the date, the place, and depth in which they were found in a museological sense. These two elements build to the final one, the projection. Paired with a motion sensor, the proximity of the onlookers will determine the chaos which

ensues on the projected video, this to visualize the direct effect humans have on the harmony which exists in the natural marine environment.

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Rana Elmiligui

THE FOLLOWING

Interactive installation

*Man shouldn't be able to see his own face
– there's nothing more sinister. Nature gave
him the gift of not being able to see it, and
of not being able to stare into his own eyes.*

*Only in the water of rivers and ponds could
he look at his face. And the very posture
he had to assume was symbolic. He had
to bend over, stoop down, to commit the
ignominy of beholding himself.*

*The inventor of the mirror poisoned the
human heart.*

- Fernando Pessoa

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The Following

It is difficult to recall a time before Social Media, for a person born in the 90s. Growing up with access to the Internet meant being exposed to, not only to knowledge but also unrestricted ignorance. As a child, your fragile and innocent mind stood bare and unprotected against the abyss of the web. In retrospect, parents had little to no control over what was being censored and what was made available for their kids to experience. Evidently, these kids have been forced to mature in some areas at a much earlier stage than generations preceding them due solely to their access to the Internet. In the course of my project titled “The Following”, I intend to explore how our access to the Internet but more specifically social media, has directly affected our behavioral psychology in terms of promoting characteristics of narcissism and exhibitionism as well as acceptance but more so a normalization of voyeurism and surveillance.

As far as the rise of Social Media, it was not until 2004 with the creation of “Facebook”, the largest social platform to date. Theories of a “global village” came into actuality as a result of the instantaneous spread of information globally. Suddenly, people from all walks of life were part of this community, this global discussion offering a platform to voice themselves in whichever way they desired making Facebook unprecedented in its nature, however, every great achievement comes with its disadvantages. As the world dove in head first, bewildered by the practicability of this program, many lines were blurred regarding personal privacy, surveillance and security. It was only after a significant time has passed and a number of lawsuits were filed against the company for releasing users’ personal data to third-party websites without their consent (Hern,1) that people realized how they were

the ones to give out all of their personal information to begin with. Political views, religious beliefs, home addresses and exact locations are all examples of the absurd commonalities that were shared blindly online, however, once the importance of privacy as a notion was dismantled by the apathetic responses from users concerning the incident, the numbers of users and data shared increased drastically from the year 2014-2018 (Smith,1).

As more social platforms emerged, all serving different purposes, some were more successful than others but all of which operated on an entirely social basis. One of them seemed to stand out distinctively amongst the global youth, that one being, Instagram. This application is a space to share personal photos with friends and strangers alike, view other people’s photos with the possibility of commenting or “liking” them, which is considered a sign of approval similar to a “thumbs up”. Although there are obvious benefits to the use of Social Media such as self expression, community building or even emotional support, the developing issue found with this platform essentially is its promotion and normalization of notions of narcissistic exhibitionism and voyeurism amongst the youth, which poses the question, are we as humans born with the innate characteristics of self-glorification and prying nature or are they merely augmented if/when given the wrong tools? In his book “the book of Disquiet”, writer Fernando Pessoa addresses a similar point quite meticulously stating, “ Man shouldn’t be able to see his own face - there’s nothing more sinister. Nature gave him the gift of not being able to see it, and of not being able to stare into his own eyes. Only in the water of rivers and ponds could he look at his face. And the very posture he had to assume was symbolic. He



From Missing Heads Series, Andy Vible. Sculpture Photography, 2012

had to bend over, stoop down, to commit the ignominy of beholding himself. The inventor of the mirror poisoned the human heart.”(Pessoa,466). This entry resonated in my mind, especially when speculating upon or even just observing people’s behavior and idiosyncrasies via social media. Perhaps, the more we look at ourselves as oppose to into ourselves, the more self-obsessed we become subconsciously, mistaking narcissism for self-love by favoring our physicality over our intellect and powers of thought. The global celebration of the “Me culture” by posting daily attires, meal consumed and selfies is growing and simultaneously dumbing us down since such way of life demands no intellectual stimulation. The effect social media has on our intelligence is highly pernicious, for instance, concentration levels are decreasing and the ability to focus on one task is becoming more difficult. Moreover, memory was once considered a vital pillar to intelligence but now with features such

as auto-correct and browser history, the skills needed for adaptation are more about retrieving information rather than recalling it (Haier,1). And so, now that we are seizing to use our memory and exercise very minimal mental activity on a day-today basis, what more damage can social media inflict upon its trusting and susceptible users? Well, Issues recorded in recent studies by the United Kingdom’s society for public health regarded psychological distress relating to the overuse of Social Media or more specifically, Instagram (MacMillan 1). Seeing people around you constantly enjoying themselves or on holiday can make young people feel like they are missing out on life whilst everyone else enjoys it, which can naturally lead to a “compare and despair attitude”. This phenomenon demonstrates how people are constantly in a state of role playing or performing, putting on false faces in order to appear the way society expects us to appear, constantly talking in symbols and floating in a world of unconscious feeling because the idea of human interaction frightens us and so we live in a world trying to live up to people’s fantasies of who we should be (Malle, My dinner with Andre).

The notion of people becoming prisoners of their own minds has been widely discussed by philosophers and theorists all throughout history, but I have found that one particular theory seems to stand out when relating to the use and misuse of social media, the Panopticism theory, which was developed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault in his 1975 book “Discipline and Punish”. The theory originated from Jeremy Bentham, an English social theorist in the 18th century who proposed the idea of a prison system named the panopticon, which would later become a social control mechanism as well as a symbol for modern authority in the western world. The basic layout of the prison consists of a central watchtower where the guards would reside, surrounded by a ring shaped building which functions





Top: Watching Machine, Grahm Caldwell mirrors, steel and hardware, dimensions variable, 2016

Bottom: Inside an Abandoned Panopticon Prison in Cuba





as prison cells. Every cell has one side open facing the tower making the prisoners always visible to the guards but the tower is far enough and has appropriately small windows that the prisoners cannot see the guards. However, whether or not there were actual guards in the tower, the prisoners disciplined themselves and passively behaved as if they were being watched, turning the authority from a physical entity to an internalized omniscience (Jokawsky,1). Arguably, there wouldn't need to be guards in the tower at all but the chance that someone might be watching had a sociological effect on the prisoners to behave as if there were. Foucault expanded the notion of the Panopticon into a symbol of social control, which extends into the daily lives of all citizens.

Although Foucault passed away before the advent of the Internet, his insights can elucidate how social media has affected us on a psychological basis through his studies on social conditioning in relation to power apply to life online. A Foucaultian perspective on social media targets the mechanism that makes it tick: sharing. Sharing is basic to social media. Sharing content is not just a neutral exchange of information, however. Mostly, when we share content on social media services, we do it transparently, visibly, that is in the presence of a crowd. The act of sharing is a performance, to an extent – it a performative act (Rayner,1). The act of sharing content on social media for a “crowd” turns the platform into a virtual panopticon except the kind of surveillance that directly impacts our behavior is not one of the social media service that monitors us for the purpose of generating targeted advertisements for the most part but actually comes from the people with whom we share. In our virtual panopticon, the only guards and prisoners that exist are us, observing and judging one another as we share content.

Ultimately, advocating moderation with the usage of Social Media seems hopeless, as smartphones have become an extension of the self. We have become bound and dependent to the web and social validation, torn between two realms, of reality and virtuality, but never fully existing in either.

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Sondos El Malah **Hepta-Floret**

Installation

7

Planets
Continents
Seas
Hells
Heavens
Sins
Virtues

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Symbolism and Analogy

When the word symbolism is mentioned, people tend to think of representation rather than the symbol itself, in , poetry, literature, shapes, and actual symbols. This research examines the proposition of language as the symbol itself, how the language of any symbol is represented based on its context; and its historical, cultural, or religious representations. This research is based on Symbolism in depth and the analogy of irony in parallel (revise sentence what are you actually trying to say here?). To be more specific, the research is based on the symbolism of seven kinds of flowers, and what they commonly represent across cultures, history, and religion, specifically, in Christianity. The idea behind this concept was because of my fascination with renaissance art; and how little flowers were acknowledged, even though their effect on the meaning of the renaissance art is overwhelming (revise sentence). Each flower has a history that differs according to its context, making it more interesting. The flowers I included in this researching are, Daisies, Ivy, Jasmine, Lily, Poppy, Rose, and Myrtle. These seven flowers are the most reoccurring in several religions and history, specifically, they are related to Christianity, ancient Egypt, and Greek mythology (Reference this to support what you are saying). The concept behind this research is to emphasize the details imposed by the artists, the meaning behind their inclusion to the work of art; and the history of that concept, whether it is related to religion, culture or history.

Dante's Inferno is about his visualization of hell and how it consistent of nine circles: Limbo, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Anger, Heresy, Violence, Fraud, and Treachery. Each circle is made up of characters throughout history- and the levels of severity of the circles increase, until you reach the very end. The reason behind this choice of irony, is because the circles

of hell are very religiously relatable. They speak of Christianity and few of the circles are directly related to the deadly sins, considered as vices within the Christian teachings, practiced only by immoral sinners.

The reason behind the irony is clarification; the representation of the symbolism behind the seven flowers within several contexts wont be enough. And that was when I thought of the juxtaposition of purity along with sin and hell, to help elaborate. The flowers are the center piece of the research, everything else is an accessory to help define the symbolism behind these flowers and their history. The contrast behind Dante's Inferno, is to pose another perspective through the vices included, and their opposing virtues as well. REVISE THIS SECTION. NOT COHERENT

The research project will examine the analogy between flowers, religions and cultures. My research will examine the symbolism of flowers in the context of Christianity, where there are various meanings and ways their symbolism is used to portray specific virtues. Flowers are one of the most widely recognized elements in flora and fauna mainly due to their beauty and aesthetic qualities. Flowers have been used in art for centuries with the intention of symbolism, (reference this with an academic source that supports what you are saying). Flowers hold a lot of religious symbolism in Christianity to portray thoughts and sign as well as culturally to symbolise certain ideas or emotions (reference this with an academic source that supports what you are saying). To be more specific, the most common flowers I have found were mentioned in more than one culture, history, mythology, and religion(Such as, give examples and be specific, provide sources to support what you are saying). The interesting part is how each flower



means something different, depending on its context and how the specific symbolism associated with these flowers are used and why. Generally, over time, they became very incorporated culturally and visually, and start being familiar to the eye. As such these connotative meanings become attributed to the same flower. Roses, for example, are one of the most commonly known flowers, namely for symbolizing love; yet, not everyone knows that there were two types of roses in ancient Egypt, and one of them is extinct and the rose we have today was the one that survived. So there is a chance that the rose symbol for Isis, the Egyptian Goddess of Love, is not the rose we are used to seeing and drawing (what do you mean by this, revise sentence, also you need references to support what you are saying) As well as the rose that Cleopatra used to spread around when she was to meet her lover, Mark Anthony; so whenever he smells roses, he would remember her. There was a link from ancient Egyptian history that lead me to the association of Dante's Inferno and the seven deadly sins, because Cleopatra is specifically included in Dante's second

circle of hell; lust. This is where lustful sinners are punished by strong winds blowing them back and forth, preventing them from peace and restfulness(provide a reference to or quote from Dante to support what you are saying here). Roses are also used as symbols in Christianity; representing heavenly joy when worn as a crown by saints as well as representing the virgin Mary as mystical (reference this by providing academic sources that support what you are saying, also clarify the difference between what you consider as Symbolic and representational) Yet, if a rose has thorns, it represents original sin; which ties back to hell and its deadly sins that come creeping. On a deeper level, the color of the rose affects its meaning and symbolism. For example, white roses are a symbol of purity, specifically, in reference to the Virgin Mary's purity; and red roses are a symbol of Christ's blood, and is usually what is used to decorate church alters on significant days, like Christmas and Easter (please reference this).

The second most common flower found amongst history, culture and religion is the lily (support this claim you are making with



a reference please). The lily is mentioned several times in Christian visuals with the Archangel Gabriel handing them to the Virgin Mary as a symbol of annunciation; which was the blessing given to the virgin Mary when entering motherhood (provide quotes from the scriptures to support your point, where it is mentioned and what does it say). This relates to lilies being the symbol of innocence and virginity in Greek mythology, having Hera as the Goddess of both childbirth and marriage (Reference this). In ancient Egyptian history water lilies were specifically seen symbolizing the life cycle because they rise every morning with the dawn and close every sunset. With water lilies symbolizing life, they invariably become related to rebirth, symbolized by the sun, being a central part of the life cycle.

a symbolism of protection and good luck (reference this).

Cleopatra is again mentioned using this flower to her lustful lover, Anthony, to seduce him and demonstrate her love for him. The Jasmine originated in Persia and it symbolizes beauty and sensuality (reference this). In china, the jasmine flower is presented to royalty and is symbol of feminine kindness, grace and delicacy, it is widely referenced in ancient Chinese writings (reference this). In India, Jasmine is used as a religious symbol of divine hope, while in Thailand it is considered to represent motherhood. In Victorian England, Jasmine symbolized amiability, cheerfulness, grace, elegance; basically, it accompanied the trend of modesty and royalty (reference this).

The third flower is commonly known with its Latin name Hedera; derived from the Greek Hédra or Haerere, which means “sit”, and refers to the grasp of its roots (reference this). The Ivy was considered the holy flower to Osiris; the god of fertility and ruler of the underworld in Ancient Egypt (reference this). According to Egyptian witchcraft, Osiris had to take human form to live on earth; Osiris was murdered and his body was found in the river, legend says that, Isis used her magical powers to rejoin Osiris’ body parts to be able to impregnate her and have his blood alive (reference this). Osiris still had his print through his afterlife, he admitted his people to a fertile and rich place called Duat, where all deceased people lived a happy life; the Ivy was his holy flower because of how it is stuck to its roots and holds on (reference this). In Greek and Roman mythology, grape vines d-Ivy- is an attribute to the vine gods Dionysus/ Bacchus; is the nature god of fruitfulness and vegetation, and is specially known as the god of wine and ecstasy (reference this). Yet, Ivy is more encountered in early Christian symbolism and medieval cathedrals. In Christianity, ivy is used as

Daises are one of most important and sentimental flowers, as the symbolize a mother’s love. Legend says, that whenever an infant died, God sprinkled daises over the earth to cheer the baby’s parents up (which legends from where – reference). In Norse mythology – Freya, the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility, considered daises to be her sacred flower, daises symbolized childbirth and new beginnings (reference this). In roman myth, Vertumnus, the God of seasons and gardens, uses daises as a symbol of chastity and transformation (reference this). Daises are composed of two separate flowers, the inner section: disc floret, and the outer section: ray floret. These two parts are a symbol of true love and how when two are compatible together, they become one. And white daises, in specific, are a symbol of innocence (according to who or what culture). Daises have their symbolism in language as well, where in old English daises are written as “day’s eye”; in reference to its petals closing overnight. And that serves explanation to why it symbolized chastity in roman myth(you need to reference or provide a quote to



support what you are saying, which roman myth, and provide a quote from it)

The poppy flower is a symbol of very contradicting elements, it symbolizes sleep, peace, and death (according to who, where are you getting this information, please reference). Sleep is considered a symbol and a meaning, because opium is extracted out of poppy seeds and was used in ancient Egypt for medicinal purposes of pain relief (reference this). They are a symbol of death because of their blood-red color and have been used historically in memorial of those who died in World War I. Furthermore, roman and Greek myths say that poppy were offered to the dead as a token of respect (reference this).

And the last flower, the Myrtle, is said to be the sacred flower of Demeter and Aphrodite (reference this). And its name is derived from the ancient Greek name Myrtos; a name of a mother and a possible eponym for the Myrtoan sea. It was considered a holy flower to the ancient Greeks; they used to plant it all around their temples as a symbol of love and marital fidelity (reference this). According to Roman and Greek mythology, Venus was the goddess



Layer Drawings, Nobuhiro Nakanishi, installation, 2010

of love, sex, beauty, and fertility, and legend says, that myrtle was her favorite flower (reference this). The story says that once walking down the isle of Gytheraea, she was shamed to show herself naked, she hid behind a myrtle tree. And since then, she declared it to be a symbol of inspiration and lasting love.

My research, examines the qualities and history of each flower, and its relationships to ancient myths, or to religious sins. And that was the reason behind the juxtaposition of Dante's hell. For Dante every historical act, persona, and myth, were all somehow connected; even if centuries separated them. Each flower, is expounded by what it symbolizes, and even its name. Each color of a flowers has its significance and has the power to send a message and an idea. The flowers- a part of a bigger whole, that not everyone is aware of. Their mystery is beyond all, and their expressiveness is far too deep to be understood from one perspective. Dante's inferno helps to elaborate or expand what these flowers symbolize and how that is manifested historically. Together, they both interpret reason behind the stories and legends of the past, things we never knew were that much connected. The reason behind this project is to examine what these flowers symbolize and analyze what they represent historically and culturally.

What I visualize for this project, is a representation of the seven chosen flowers, and having them as the core part of the project. They will be carved in wood and will be hung on the wall. In addition to the research, a fresco-like drawing will be presented in front of the carving. This fresco-like drawing will have representations of the flowers, their history, their symbolism, Dante's inferno, and all that will help the viewer analyze the concept. It will be on rice paper, and I will be using ink, water colors, layering, and the actual flowers.





Youmna Adel
**SUCH A
VICIOUS CYCLE**

Interactive installation

The human condition is characterized by the high probability of suffering and the certainty of death, it is a fate which human reason cannot accept as reasonable. Accordingly, throughout the ages, humans have found several ways in order to accept the idea of death as well as the absurdity of life. This is one of them.

-Albert Camus, Myth of Sisyphus

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A Conversaion with a Past Life

Who are you?
What's your name?
You are silent because you can't speak?
Why aren't you speking?
What is your name?
Why are you avoiding people?
Why?
What is your job? Do you work?
Is this why you wear white?
Where do you live?
Shows home, a village wooden cotttage, very cold and very dark
Do you live alone?

Scene changes to a dining table, Fouad sits and bends over his plate and starts eating.

What are you eating?
Are you eating alone?
But you are not eating alone. I hear eating sounds around you. why do you refuse to see the people around you?

Scene changes to a wedding ceremony, where there is an alter, a man and a bride standing waiting for the groom. The groom gets in, takes a look at the woman, and rushes out of the place they were in. He runs to the mountains and starts taking off his tie and jacket. I rushed after him.
Slow down, I can't keep up.

I couldn't keep up yet, I heard a sound saying that I'll catch him.

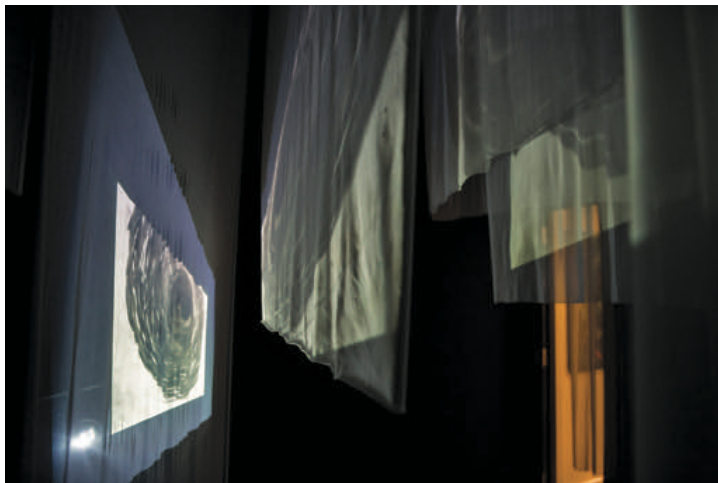
Why did you run away? Don't you love her?

Scene changes. A man in a black hat and coat, brown or grey, I don't remember. A city, it looks and feels grey, it looked like a war torn city. The buldings have war traces on them. Fouad looks to his left, his right, and crosses the street. A car hits him, people gather around to see if he survived. I see Fouad's soul exitinghis body. He comes to me.

Are you sad that you died alone?
What would you have done differently if you had to relive your life all over again?
Give me an advice to follow, what is you advice to me?
What should I do to get everything out of my system?









Reincarnation of the Universe

The human condition is characterized by a high probability of suffering and the certainty of death, it is a fate which human reason cannot seemingly accept. Accordingly, throughout the ages, humans have found several ways in order to accept the idea of death as well as the absurdity of life. Camus' Myth of Sisyphus (Camus, 2012), Nietzsche's vicious circle of the eternal return (Klossowski and Smith, n.d.), are all philosophical interpretations as to how these philosophers saw the world to its end, and their interpretations of the meaning of life and death.

These ideas act as comforting illusions, as a sanctuary for humans in order to find comfort in the least of the existing disturbing ideas. Humans create concepts and have ideas all the time and they spare their lives in the aim of proving these concepts, they refer to science, human nature, existing philosophical theories and religion. The certainty of death lead people to create a coping mechanism. A parallel universe in which humans can behave and believe whatever makes them accept the idea of death.

Another thing to mention is that religions and how they explained life and death, left a lot of questions unanswered. In fact, many religions do not encourage questioning time and space. There are answers however they are revealed to those who look very close in whatever tool there is. Sometimes, looking so deep in these clues in order to find answers can lead people to madness, to losing their sanity because it tickles a very thin line of certainty and beliefs.

In this paper, a very old concept is reformulated, it has been reached through an extensive research on the soul, religion, philosophy and life. This concept is that the world and the universe as we know them are in a constant state of reincarnation, the idea now is not only about its souls. Philosophers

and religion interpreters have long talked about this concept from the ancient times while many others tried to refute it. The concept of reincarnation was first created by ancient Egyptians, the buddhist, hindus and greeks however, after the monotheistic religions descended to earth, many of their followers refuted and refused the idea of reincarnation because for them it contradicted the idea of the afterlife and the judgement day. However in this paper, the reformulated concept is based on a personal interpretation of Islamic Quraanic verses and tales as well as provision of the apocalypse and the judgement day, it is also based on the scientific idea of the death of the sun and its explosion, on reincarnation tales mentioned in history and in several academic researches done by experts in the field.

Several reincarnation stories has been told by muslims, hindus and Wicca followers throughout the ages, some of these tales happen among the Druze sect in the islamic religion where the belief in reincarnation is regarded again, as atypical, but in this sect, the belief in reincarnation creates a sense of unity among the sect. For example the Druze believe that reincarnation occurs among all humans at all places and times, and that some remember previous lives but the majority do not. There is, however, no blanket agreement among Druze regarding reincarnation. There are many who are skeptical about the phenomenon and dismiss it outright. At the same time there are many others who circulate stories and maintain a curiosity and openness about the phenomenon. (Reincarnation, Sect Unity, and Identity among the Druze, 2006).

After Looking at a research done in 2006 by Anne Bennet looking into Reincarnation among the Druze and looks into three stories of reincarnation, one of them is of Saeed and Umm Yasser, it happened as follows "Another first





encounter story comes from Saeed, a man now in his seventies who met his presumed reincarnated mother when he was in his thirties and she was about four years old. At that time, Saeed lived in Suwayda and the girl lived in Salkhad, a village some 30 kilometers southeast of Suwayda. The girl's paternal uncle had gone to Suwayda to inform Saeed's family about her and what she had been saying. She had convinced some members of her natal family that her family from a previous life really existed and was not a figment of her imagination. The uncle went to visit Saeed's family, telling them about the girl and what she had been saying, and inviting them to visit Salkhad. Saeed's first meeting with his reincarnated mother went as follows:

She [the girl] had spoken to her family. She told them, "my name is so and so, and I have children who are named.. ." and she would name all her children. She spoke to them about our life, you know, how we lived from day to day. She was four years old. Imagine that!

(AB: And she didn't have any way of knowing you before that?)

No, never. There had never been any kind of relationship between her and us. None at all.

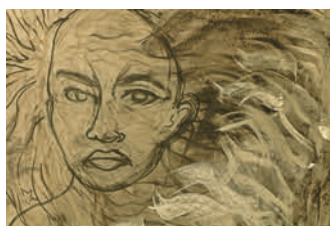
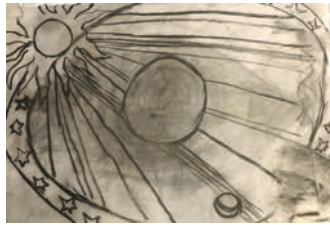
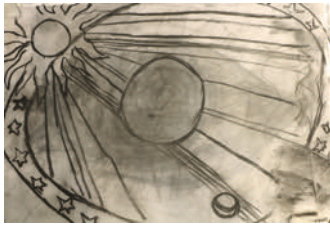
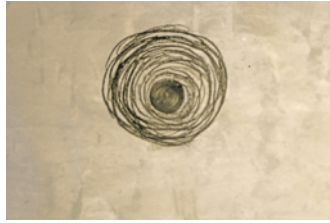
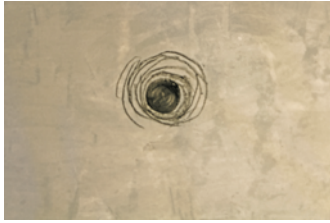
(AB: What did your "mother" say to you the first time you went to Salkhad? What was it like that day?)

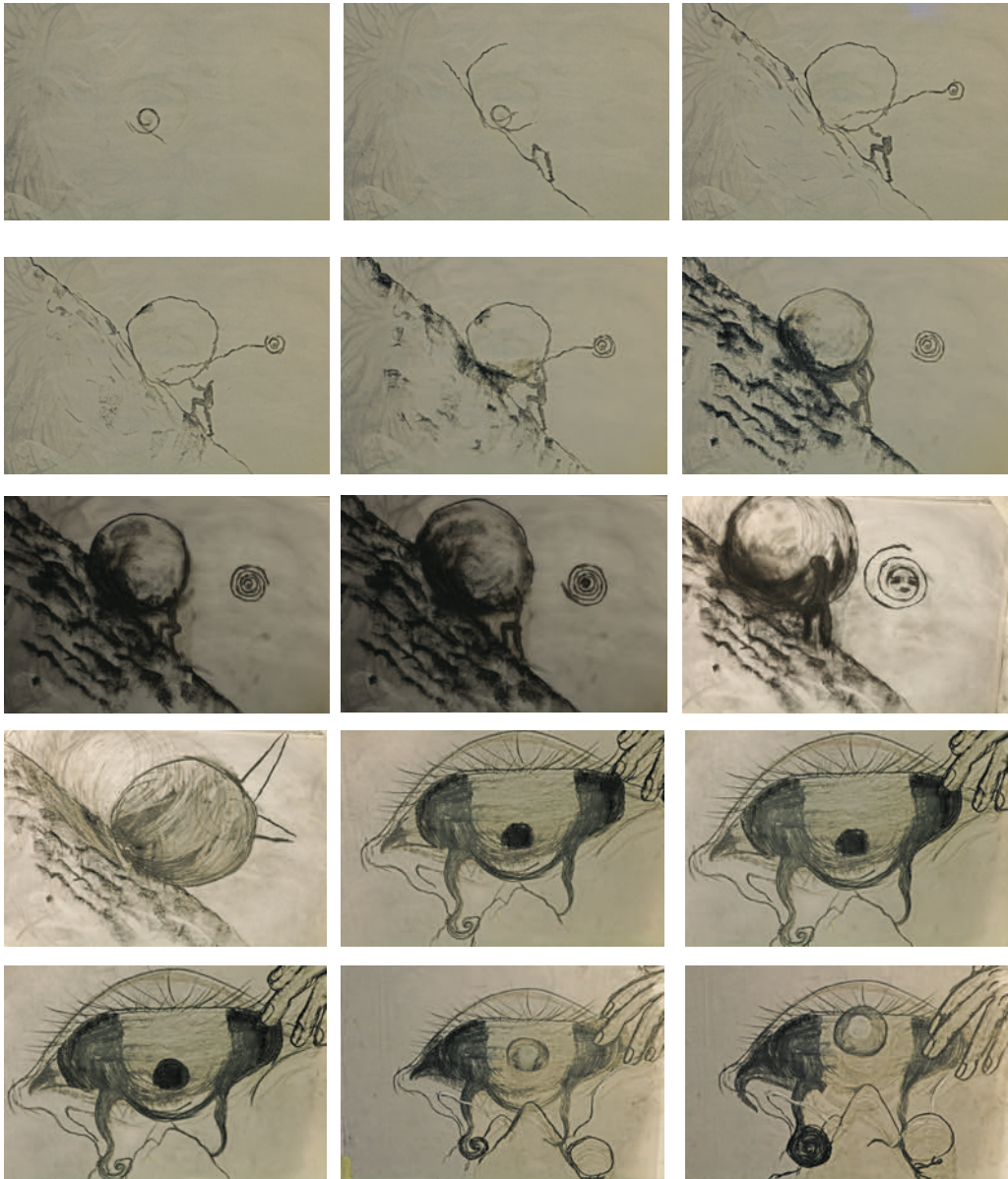
It was extremely difficult she cried. She threw herself to her mother's housedress and cried. Of course I tried to encourage her to come over to me but she was too overcome, On another day when her grandmother and grandfather came to visit me, she grabbed on and cried and cried. She loved me so much. And I loved her very much. You cried and cried and cried and cried. After a little while she started to feel cleaned off. I reached for her face, and that's when I started to spoil and laughs]. She never ran away from me again. And ever since that day, I a strange thing, not an everyday thing at all. Rather, it is a mystery. I can't explain it.

Saeed's first encounter is less typical than those of Abu Qassim, Amal and others where the willingness to accept that one is in the presence of a reincarnated person is not immediate. Of the three cases, S his reincarnated mother came easily, and he is the exceptio immediate family. Saeed's sister, Rasmia, said she had not s referred to by her kunya) in several years. Saeed admitted t his siblings most consistently maintained a relationship wit mother, whom he always referred to as "my mother." Abu Q hand, approached his reincarnated kin with a studied distance at Qasim returned from Damascus and had time to visit the boy time, he and his wife drove to his house to talk with him and "t he was exactly who he claimed to be. Abu Qasim reported "The first question I asked him was "when exactly did you know you w replied, "The first time I felt that I was someone else was when I was th myself thinking that I was an adult and therefore that I should be physic quite confused about why I was small, about why I was in achild's body "Soon after that sensation, memories of my mother came to me." (Reincarnation, Sect Unity, and Identity among the Druze, 2006)

These are two of many stories that document real life reincarnation. However this paper puts down a new theory. The reincarnation of the universe. It is in the sense that it starts and ends from the same point, the sun and its explosion and transformation into a supernova, due to a change in its chemistry and a reaction between its hydrogen and helium molecules, it will expand into Mercury's orbit. Hence the earth temperature will increase, its rotation around the sun will change to clockwise instead of counter-clockwise and the Islamic provisions of the Apocalypse will occur, the sun will rise from the west and the sets in the east, there will be floods, extreme droughts and earthquakes too. (Filiu, 2012), These provisions were mentioned in the quraan as well in Surat El Zalzala Chapter 99 بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ









إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا (1) وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا (2) وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا (3) يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا (4) يَا أَيُّهَا رَبِّكَ أُوْحَىٰ لَهَا (5) يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوُا أَعْمَالَهُمْ (6) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (7) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (8)

When the earth is shaken with its (final) earthquake. 2. And when the earth throws out its burdens,3. And man will say: “What is the matter with it?”4. That Day it will declare its information (about all what happened over it of good or evil),5. Because your Lord has inspired it,6. That Day mankind will proceed in scattered groups that they may be shown their deeds,7. So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. 8. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. There are more signs mentioned in the Quraan about the signs of judgement day. Consequently these stories lead to the understanding that any trace of the human beings existence on earth allowing recreation of the world.

Islamic religious resources too have been looked at and interpreted and therefore taken into consideration, the story of the Prophet Muhammed’s trip during “El Isra” wel Mi3raj” بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿ ... سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنَ آيَاتِنَا وَهُوَ بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَى * نَمَّا دَنَا فَتَدَلَّ * فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى * فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ * مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ when he went up the seven skies and saw people already receiving their judgement. However, it is known that no one would received any judgement except after all the humanity is dead and the judgement day is done. This only proves that these people has existed before us and they experienced their judgement day and now receiving what they deserve.

This project will examine the cyclical connection between the end and the beginning of the world, the soul birth and death by considering Greek and Hindu mythologies and Islamic scriptures cited from the Holy Quran All these will be used in order to research whether we, human beings’ souls and the universe are in an

actual state of reincarnation or not.

First, I’d like to explain that the idea of this project has been haunting me ever since I was 13 years old. Someday in June 2010, I watched a documentary about our star known as the Sun. The Death of a Star was its name. It basically talked about how the sun will explode due to a change in its gazes chemical components. The Hydrogen will increase and will be much more than the Helium components which will lead to a change in the chemical components of the sun. More hydrogen will react with the same number of helium, H2He instead of HHe, an excess in Hydrogen will lead to the sun explosion. When the sun explodes, it will expand in size and burn Mercury, and therefore the sun will get closer to the earth one orbit. This will result in the sun having more gravity force on planet earth and that will change the earth rotation direction to clock-wise instead of counter clock-wise. This change in the rotation direction will lead to several natural disasters that will abolish human life on earth.

I came across several documents and articles that talk about reincarnation of the soul and that in Islam, reincarnation beliefs and practices do exist, in some cultures more than others however they do exist. One of these cultures is the Druze as mentioned above as well as the Allawites people, Ahl el Haq and el Ismailiyya Shia followers (‘Ubayd., 1976), who are associated with the Shi’a sect of Islam. They believe in reincarnation however, they only see that it happens within their sect. Many more Islamic tribes and sects believe in reincarnation which is not known among people because the basic Islamic belief is built on the idea of death and the afterlife. It is built on the idea that after we die we receive a judgement thereby resulting in punishment or reward. However, these Islamic sects share with the Hindus their beliefs, that human souls get reincarnated until they achieve goodness, or until they



become the best versions of themselves and this is according to the buddhist version of reincarnation, they believe that humans get rebirth until they achieve a state of selflessness, The path is about living life correctly and has the following steps: Right Views, Right Intent, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.(Nawang Gehlek, Alhadeff and Magill, 2002)

In this project I will attempt to create my own theory of reincarnation; whereby it is not just the reincarnation of the soul, it is the reincarnation of the whole universe as we know it. This can happen as a parallel universe or as a whole new universe that creates itself starting from the day of the apocalypse of the other life/universe

Having all of these questions on time, space, human soul, apocalypse and reincarnation, I created a connection between all of them, and created my own theory about the reincarnation of the universe that of which I will create an artwork that will depict the absurdity of the cycle we are in and how all of these factors are connected in an absurd way in order to create the system we live in.





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