

No night is long enough for us to dream twice

Artwork Labels

Introduction

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No night is long enough for us to dream twice

Perhaps reality itself must first be laid to rest before another dream can take shape.

No night is long enough for us to dream twice (a title borrowed from a line by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish) brings together photography and video by Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Mohamad Abdouni, Hicham Benohoud, Myriam Boulos, Mohamed Bourouissa, Sabiha Çimen, Hannah Darabi and Abdulhamid Kircher. While these artists work across South West Asia, North Africa and their diasporas, what they share is less a common geography than a relation to *pressure*. Their images emerge from physical and emotional sites where social forces build, break, then build again.

This relation to pressure also mirrors the contemporary conditions of photography, a medium marked by its own thresholds and limitations. Photography has often understood meaning as something that already exists in the world, awaiting capture. Henri Cartier-Bresson's formulation of the 'decisive moment' gives this impulse its enduring form: the singular, privileged instant in which everything is revealed.

The images in this show extend this idea of the decisive moment by laying claim to a moment that cannot be sustained—a flicker of envy, a collision of bodies, a failure of a father, an absurd gesture, the joy of a child—

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but in capture it is released, and the pressure of the day made temporarily tolerable, before collapsing back into the choppy flow of ongoing life.

Against theoretical frameworks that read photography through loss, trauma or melancholy, these works can be seen as energetically generative rather than elegiac. These images are not only records of what Roland Barthes called the 'that-has-been', they bang against, and burst through, the limits of the world.

Like dreams these works do not resolve. Through aesthetic strategies of intensification, they generate states of affective overstimulation in which desire, terror, pleasure and ecstasy accumulate, proliferate and exceed the social conditions that attempt to contain them. In this sense, the exhibition shifts from a modernist faith in the image as revelation toward an understanding of photography as provisional: a *temporary symbolic gesture* whose meaning emerges through the conditions of its appearance.

Collectively, these practices disrupt the expectation that photography must explain everything or anything. Through staging, intimate observation, appropriation and montage, these works unsettle familiar narratives between victim and militant, tradition and modernity, visibility and erasure. Like dreams, they open onto a world of greater immediacy: one of bodily sensation, fractured states and energetic abundance, all intermingling.

If 'to dream' names a form of individual and collective imagination, *No night is long enough for us to dream twice* suggests that the political role of the image in its capacity to shape how reality appears is in a stage of ongoing

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negotiation and always unresolved. What can be seen in these works is not a more truthful representation of South West Asia and North Africa, but a shift in the conditions through which these places, histories and identities become legible. In doing so, the exhibition explores visual grammars that disrupt inherited modes of seeing and expand the potentials of contemporary photography.

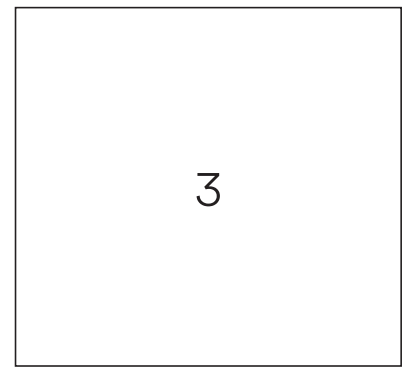
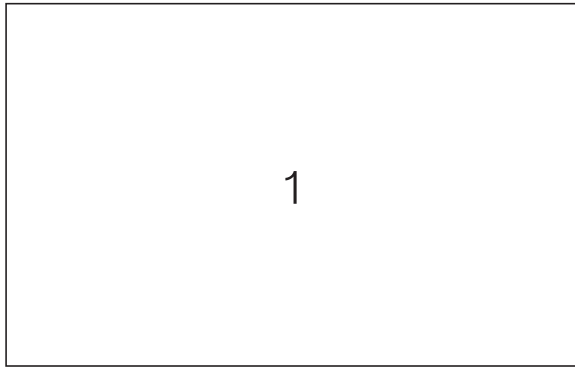
No night is long enough for us to dream twice is presented by AGWA's Simon Lee Foundation Institute of Contemporary Asian Art.

AGWA PRINCIPAL PARTNER

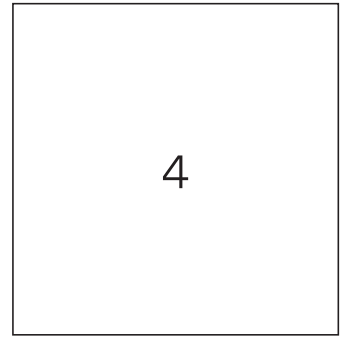
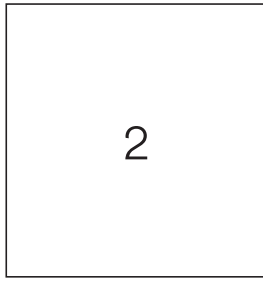
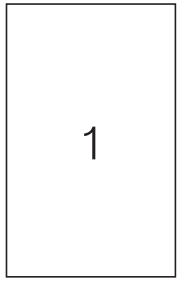


PRESENTING PARTNER

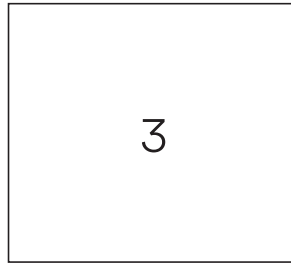
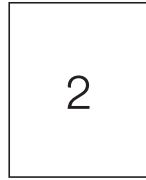
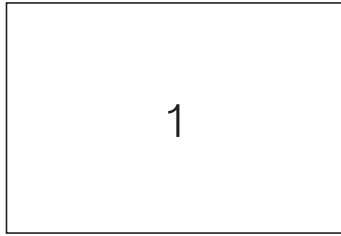




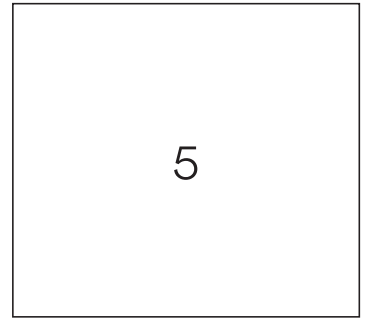
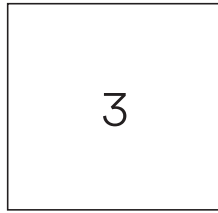
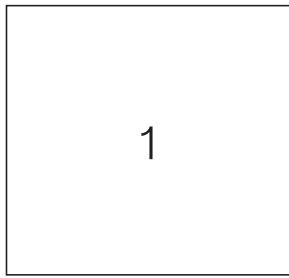
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- 1 Farah Al Qasimi, Star Machine, AGWA, 2023
 - 2 Farah Al Qaimi, Hello Future, Capricious, 2021
 - 3 Cold Cuts – Issue 01, Cold Cuts, 2017



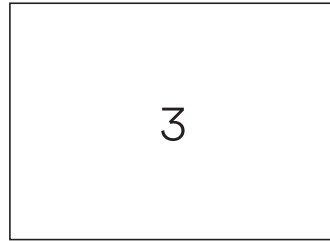
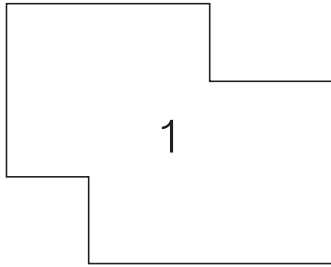
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- 1 Mohamad Abdouni, *Soft Skills – How to Properly Sit On a Chair*, Lafayette Anticipations, 2024
 - 2 Charbel El Khoury, *Not Here Not There*, Middle East Archive, 2025
 - 3 Myriam Boulos, *What's Ours*, Aperture, 2023
 - 4 Abdulhamid Kircher, *Rotting from Within*, Loose Joints, 2024



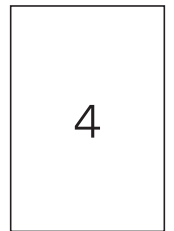
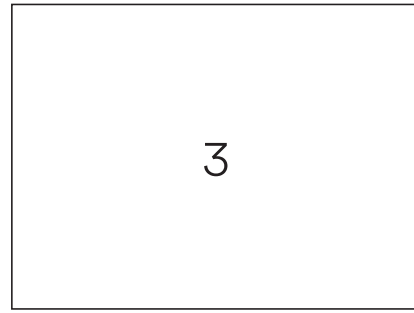
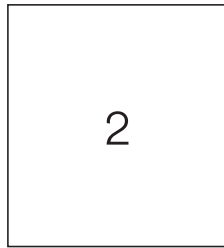
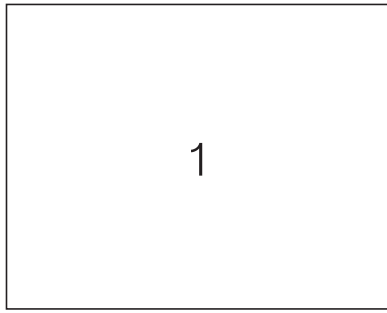
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- 1 Laura El-Tantawy, In the Shadow of Pyramids, Nameless Publishing, 2015
 - 2 Mahmoud Khattab, The Dog Sat Where We Parted, Self published, 2024
 - 3 Maen Hammad, Landing, Self published, 2025
 - 4 Fethi Sahraoui, Triangle of Views, La Chambre Claire, 2018



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- 1 Mahtab Hussain, *You Get Me?*, MACK, 2017
 - 2 Mohamed Bourouissa, *Périphérique*, exhibition catalogue, Le Château d'Eau and the Les Filles du Calvaire Gallery, 2008
 - 3 Eugenie Dolberg and Irada al Jobbour, *Open Shutters Iraq*, Trolley Books, 2009
 - 4 Sakir Khader, *Dying to Exist*, 550BC, 2025
 - 5 Hannah Darabi, *Enghelab Street: Iran 1979-1983: A Revolution Through Books*, Spector Books, 2019



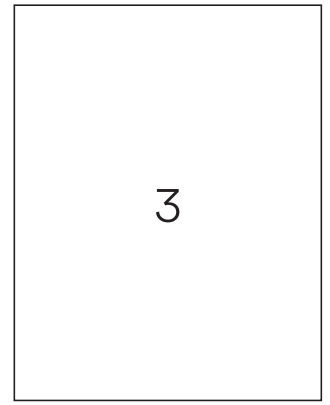
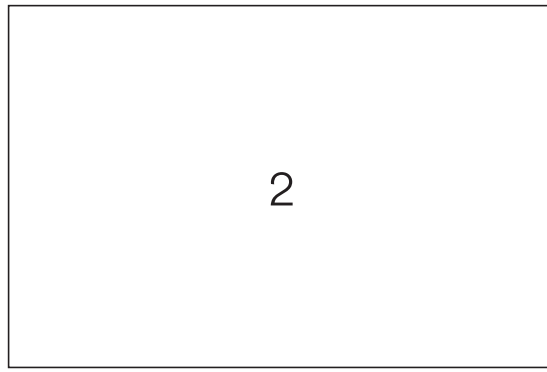
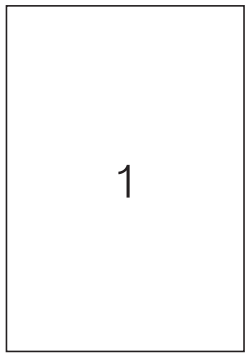
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- 1 Mohamed Mahdy, Here, the Doors Don't Know Me, Trobades Camus, 2025
 - 2 Mohamed Bourouissa, Pour Noubia, Mousse Publishing, 2026
 - 3 Hoda Afshar, Speak the Wind, MACK, 2021
 - 4 Sabiha Çimen, Hafiz, Red Hook Editions, 2023



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- 1 Taysir Batniji, Home Away From Home, Aperture, 2018
 - 2 Hoda Afshar, The Fold, Loose Joints, 2025
 - 3 Women, Middle East Archive, 2026
 - 4 Yumna Al Arashi, Aisha, Edition Patrick Frey, 2024



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- 1 Hicham Benohoud, The Classroom, Loose Joints, 2025
 - 2 Oumayma Ben Tanfous, Between I and Lands, Self published, 2025
 - 3 Rawsht Twana, TWANA's BOX – The Photographic life of Twana Abdullah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq 1974-199, Fraglich Publishing, 2023
 - 4 Êvar Huseynî, Cries of Soil, Self published, 2026



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- 1 An Archive of Love, Middle East Archive, 2023
 - 2 Hannah Darabi, Soleil of Persian Square, 2021
 - 3 Nadhim Ramzi, Iraq: The Land and The People, Artscan, 1989

Hicham Benohoud

La Salle de Classe

1994–2000

archival pigment prints

Courtesy of the artist

Benohoud is a photographer whose practice explores identity politics and power relations with irony and feigned lightness. Frequently using his own body as a subject, his work is characterised by staged, constructed imagery in which everyday objects are transformed into unsettling, thought-provoking compositions.

Benohoud made *La Salle de Classe* with his students while working as an art teacher in Marrakech. Frustrated by the rigidity of Morocco's educational system, he transformed the enclosed, disciplined space of the classroom into an open, messy space in which the students participated in 'photographic exercises'. The resulting images record a playful pedagogical experiment and, perhaps, a small space of freedom within postcolonial Morocco.

In turning his students into active participants rather than passive subjects, Benohoud creates a temporarily reconfigured public: a collective brought together through imaginative play, even as the photographs remain haunted by the structures that determine who can participate, how and under what conditions. This

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contradiction underscores the entire series. While some students perform as surreal puppets others continue to work dutifully at their desks. Are the latter more disciplined than those who appear bound, suspended or transformed into living sculptures?

Benohoud was born in 1968 in Marrakech, Morocco, and works in Paris, France.

Left to right

Sabiha Çimen

A student puts her hand on a plastic bag full of air. İstanbul, 2020

A poster painted by students showing the devil and an angel. İstanbul, 2020

A shared phone for communal use within the school. İstanbul, 2019

Asya plays with pet birds in the teachers' room. Rize, 2018

Fatma, fifteen, wears party lights around her head on her birthday. İstanbul, 2017

Students enjoying themselves at an amusement park. İstanbul, 2018

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A plane flies low over students at an amusement park. İstanbul, 2018

Melike, fifteen, hangs out in her school's backyard during noon break. İstanbul, 2018

Zeliha, fifteen, has been living at the Quran school for three years. Kars, 2018

Melike, fifteen, loves to scare her friends by flipping back her eyelids, like a character in a horror movie. İstanbul, 2019

Girls learning to roller-skate. İstanbul, 2018

Vildan, eight, still getting used to the headscarf. İstanbul, 2020

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Girls playing with a pink smoke flare during a picnic. İstanbul, 2018

A wallpaper map. İstanbul, 2020

Dining room with painted sunflowers covering the window. İstanbul, 2020

from the series *Hafız: Guardians of the Qur'an*
2021

archival pigment prints

Courtesy of the artist and LOOCK Galerie, Berlin

Mine was an enchanted world, one in which I had not just many mothers, but even a copy of myself: a twin sister, one in which if I only closed my eyes, I could find myself transposed into another body. There was another me, wearing the same clothes, wrapped in the same colours ... who experienced the same tastes, fears, anxieties. It was a world of sameness, but it was a sameness that sang in harmony, in patterns, in course and images repeating.

SABIHA ÇIMEN, 2021

Çimen is a self-taught photographer whose practice explores female identity as a dynamic process of becoming. Focusing on Muslim girls and women, her

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portraits and still lives blend documentary realism with poetic surrealism to show how identity is continuously shaped through faith, community and everyday life. Moving beyond reductive representations of Muslim women as passive or oppressed, her images celebrate the freedom to reinvent, adapt and self-define on one's own terms.

Hafız offers an intimate portrait of girlhood within the single-sex Qur'an schools of Türkiye. Çimen attended one of these schools herself from the age of twelve, studying alongside her twin sister for three years. The schools are places of intensive religious study, where students spend several years memorising the Qur'an by heart. Yet Çimen's photographs look beyond the discipline of this education to the everyday lives of the young women: roller-skating, playing with birds, frightening friends and enjoying amusement parks. In these moments, devotion exists alongside friendship, fear, humour, anxiety, boredom, anger, mischief, melodrama and the pleasures of adolescence.

Çimen was born in İstanbul, Türkiye, in 1986 to an ethnically Kurdish Persian family; she currently lives between İstanbul and New York, United States.

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme

Collapse

2009

black and white video, sound

8 min 20 sec (looped)

Courtesy of the artists

Abbas and Abou-Rahme work across sound, image, text, installation and performance to probe a contemporary landscape marked by seemingly perpetual crisis and an endless present. Their practice often begins with existing materials which they sample, fragment and reassemble to create new audio-visual configurations. Rather than treating history as linear or complete, their practice understands time as dense and accumulative: images, gestures and unrealised possibilities persist within the present, available for reactivation.

Collapse was made following Abbas and Abou-Rahme's return to Palestine in 2008. After several years abroad, they encountered a radically altered landscape, not only spatially but politically and psychologically. The failures of the Second Intifada and the transformation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation into the Palestinian Authority had contributed to a sense of political fragmentation and the loss of a shared narrative of resistance. Abbas and Abou-Rahme responded by looking to earlier images that expressed the potential and

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failures of resistance, alongside their own experiences of the present.

The resulting video brings together fragments from Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Henry Barakat's *The Open Door* (1964) and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), with footage made by the artists themselves. Recurring images of running bodies appear suspended between flight and pursuit, their repetitive movement suggesting both urgency and an inability to arrive.

This instability is central to *Collapse*. Through montage, disparate images are brought into relation without settling into a single narrative. Past and present, documentary and fiction, memory and experience collide and alter one another. In doing so, the work creates a shifting field in which bodies, places and histories appear simultaneously present and elsewhere. Such ambiguities register a reality in which the boundaries between the real and the imagined have become increasingly difficult to hold apart.

Abbas and Abou-Rahme were born in 1983 in Nicosia, Cyprus and Boston, United States, respectively. Collaborators since 2009, they live and work between Palestine and New York, United States.

Abdulhamid Kircher

Rotting from Within

2014–ongoing

archival family photos, personal objects, photocopies, chromogenic prints, silver gelatin prints, inkjet prints and 30 SD videos

Courtesy of the artist and carlier | gebauer, Berlin and Madrid

Kircher uses photography, video and archival materials to construct multivalent narratives that are emotionally candid, autobiographically charged and quietly unflinching. Through an associative visual logic anchored in his transnational family history, he explores how different relational bonds emerge within distinct social and familial environments and how these, in turn, shape understandings of people and place.

Rotting from Within began as an attempt to understand the generational patterns of trauma and violent behaviour within Kircher's family. At 17, he reconnected with his estranged father after his incarceration for selling drugs and attempted murder. Over the following decade their relationship became the basis for a photographic installation that has continued to evolve through several iterations.

In making the work, Kircher spent time first with his father in Berlin, and later with his grandparents and

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close relatives in Türkiye to immerse himself within the social environments that shaped his father. Images, objects and recordings become traces of a history that is intimate, fractured and difficult to reconcile, exposing the fragile threads of masculinity that bind fathers and sons across generations.

Kircher was born in 1996 in Berlin to German and Turkish parents, and immigrated with his mother to the United States at the age of eight; he currently lives and works between Berlin, Germany and New York, United States.

Top, then left to right

Mohamed Bourouissa

Le cercle imaginaire

2007–2008

Photo Tex wallpaper

La main

2008

c-print

La fenêtre

2005

c-print

La prise

2008

c-print

La république

2006

c-print

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Le groupe

2007–2008

c-print

Le poing

2007–2008

c-print

La morsure

2007

c-print

Courtesy of the artist; PALAS, Sydney and MENNOUR, Paris

Bourouissa works with photography and video, constructing images that deliberately occupy the unstable space between documentation and fiction. Working closely with the communities he depicts, Bourouissa explores the power of image-making to reinforce and unsettle the systems of representation through which lives are made visible, classified and interpreted.

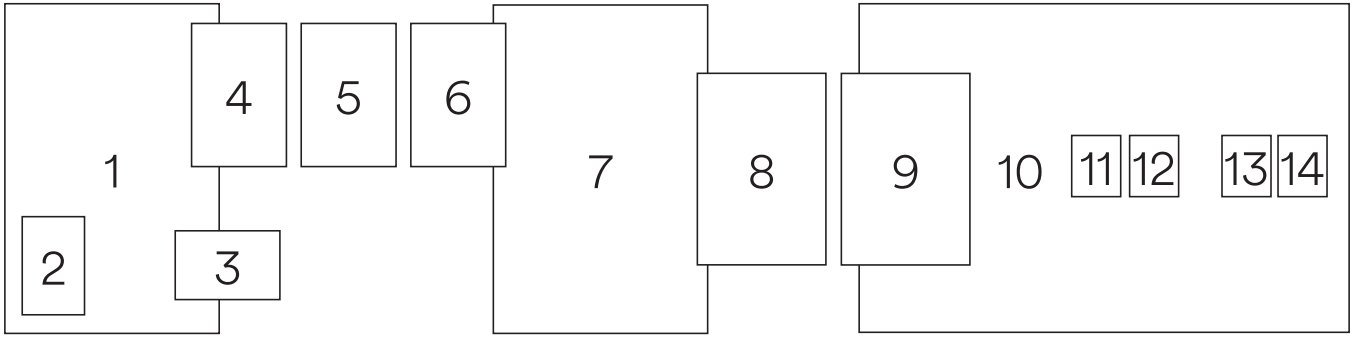
Périphérique began in the early 2000s as a series of portraits of friends and acquaintances living in the working-class Parisian banlieues (suburbs), which are home to many French people of North and West African descent. Drawing on the compositional language and visual authority of European history painting, Bourouissa carefully staged each scene to produce images of striking

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formal complexity as figures gather, confront one another, avert their gaze, embrace or simply linger.

Bourouissa's photographs do not explain the banlieues or resolve their political complexity. Instead, he brings a knowable history of art into his images, using its familiar visual language to trouble the narratives through which working-class neighbourhoods have long been represented in public life. The photographs do not reduce their subjects to stereotypes of violence, exclusion or successful integration, instead presenting the fragility of the banlieues as people continuously negotiate rigid nationalisms, ideas of unity and the pressures of the present.

Bourouissa was born in 1978 in Blida, Algeria; he moved to France at the age of five with his mother. He grew up in Courbevoie, a banlieue (suburb) north-west of Paris, and continues to reside in Paris.



Mohamad Abdouni

- 1 **Doris & Andrea IV**
2019
Photo Tex wallpaper
- 2 **Doris & Andrea VI**
2019
- 3 **Doris & Andrea I**
2019
- 4 **Untitled**
2019
- 5 **Untitled**
2020

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6 **A Strange Man Tends To
My Garden**

2023

7 **Enkidu**

2022

Photo Tex wallpaper

8 **The Tail End of a Horse**

2022

9 **Öykü Başar**

2021

10 **Red Curtains**

2019

Photo Tex wallpaper

11 **Hadi**

2019

12 **Dana**

2019

13 **Mama Jad**

2019

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14 **Em Abed**

2019

All archival pigment prints unless otherwise stated

Courtesy of the artist and MARFA, Beirut

Abdouni is a powerful storyteller whose photographs and films of queer life in the Arab world make visible the beauty, complexity and diversity of human connection. Through intimate portraits that oscillate between libidinally charged performance and everyday scenes of quiet vulnerability, Abdouni builds celebratory narratives around bodily liberation and gender expression in Beirut and the wider region. His photographs create spaces in which identity is not fixed or prescribed but performed, negotiated and imagined. They invite viewers to examine their own projections and, perhaps, to suspend judgement, of others and of themselves.

The installation brings together key works that explore intimacy, self-expression and relation. The photographs *Dana*, *Mama Jad*, *Hadi* and *Em Abed*, from *Treat Me Like Your Mother*, look to the past to document the histories and experiences of transgender women and gender-diverse people in Lebanon. Combining cinematic and vernacular imagery, the series resists reductive representations of queerness, instead capturing moments of unbridled beauty, desire and hope. In recovering these lives and stories, Abdouni creates an archive of presence: one in which people who have often been rendered

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invisible can appear on their own terms.

The series *Doris & Andrea* documents the relationship between a mother, Doris, and her genderqueer child, Andrea. Their bond challenges conventional ideas of family and asks what, beyond biological or social convention, might constitute kinship. Through candid photographs, Abdouni captures their everyday life and the tenderness of their relationship. Ultimately, these images embody a loving familial reality that, for many people, remains an unrealised possibility.

Abdouni was born in 1989 Beirut, Lebanon where he currently resides.

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Mohamed Bourouissa

Généalogie de la Violence

2024

HD colour video, sound

15 min (looped)

© Mohamed Bourouissa ADAGP, DIVISION; Production: DIVISION and Studio Mohamed Bourouissa; with the support of CNC, ARTE France, Mennour, Paris, BLUM, Los Angeles and Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Courtesy of the artist; DIVISION; Mennour, Paris and PALAS, Sydney

Imagine a film about police brutality, with no brutality. A film where nothing happens, yet you're left baffled. Invisible violence, disguised under lawful humiliation. Domination wrapped in polite protocols. I started talking about making this short film back in 2018, but the idea of it was haunting me probably since the late 90s, when I started being constantly stopped by the police for 'random identity checks'.

I felt a certain urgency to tell this very personal story.

MOHAMED BOUROUISSA, 2024

Bourouissa works with photography and video, constructing images that deliberately occupy the unstable space between documentation and fiction. Working closely with the communities he depicts, Bourouissa explores the power of image-making to reinforce and unsettle the systems of representation through which lives are made visible, classified and interpreted.

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Généalogie de la Violence transforms an act of racial profiling into a surreal, animated out of-body experience. Rather than retreating from violence, the video descends further into it: entering the body of the young man in order to leave it, the young man leaving his body by diving into a dream.

Subjective violence draws attention because it is visually spectacular. While structural violence operates through its invisibility. It is administered quietly in ordinary settings—through accumulated biases and institutional practices that rarely leave visible marks. Without reproducing the violent saturation and fragmentation of contemporary media coverage, the video registers the contours of the man's body and his surrounding environment just before they dissipate.

By turning inward, Bourouissa gives form to what cannot be seen: a beating heart, accelerated breath and involuntary inflammation become the sites through which shame, humiliation and suppressed anger are made palpable. In doing so, the work depicts this moment of tension as a synaesthetic release from a hostile situation: a way of bringing attention to the ways violence structures society itself.

Bourouissa was born in 1978 in Blida, Algeria; he moved to France at the age of five with his mother. He grew up in Courbevoie, a banlieue (suburb) north-west of Paris, and continues to reside in Paris.

Hannah Darabi

Mahvash's Book of Pleasure, Why Don't You Dance?

2026

archival pigment prints

Courtesy of the artist and supported by Photo Elysée, Lausanne

Darabi is an artist-researcher working with photography and video to construct new images of Iranian public life. Rather than treating the photographic image as a stable record, she collages material from different eras and geographical locations to make palpable the ongoing reverberations of Iran's past in the present. Much of her work uses visual culture to trace shifting attitudes towards beauty, dress and gender expression across decades of political change in Iranian society.

Mahvash, one of the best-known cabaret performers of 1950s Iran, provides the starting point for this series of photo collages. Inspired by her fictionalised autobiography, *The Secrets of Sexual Fulfillment* (1957), Darabi uses the censored book to explore the role of dance as a form of resistance during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, while examining the increasing restrictions placed on women's appearance, movement and self-expression. By combining excerpts from Mahavash's writing with magazine imagery from the 1960s and 1970s, found ephemera and personal photographs, Darabi offers

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a new perspective on Mahvash's story and the shifting cultural landscape in which it unfolded.

In 2025, Darabi was awarded the Prix Elysée, which supports artistic creation in the field of photography, for her project *Why Don't You Dance?* Bringing together iconic figures from Iranian popular dance, the project traces how dance has functioned across different times and places as a form of joyful resistance and cultural expression.

Darabi was born in 1981 in Tehran, Iran and currently resides in Paris, France.

Hannah Darabi

Sepideh, Follow the Beat, Why Don't You Dance?

2026

single channel colour video with sound

8 min 18 sec

Courtesy of the artist and supported by Photo Elysée, Lausanne

In *Sepideh*, Darabi worked with Iranian-born dancers and choreographers to reinterpret the energetic workout routines of acclaimed dancer and choreographer, Mohammad Khordadian. After fleeing Iran following the 1979 Revolution, Khordadian settled in Los Angeles, where he recorded workout videos built around Iranian dance routines. The tapes became hugely popular both inside Iran and across the diaspora. By subverting traditional gender roles and connecting past styles with contemporary dance practices, Darabi emphasises the role of dance as a tool of emancipation and political expression.

Darabi was born in 1981 in Tehran, Iran and currently resides in Paris, France.

Hannah Darabi

Tehran-Los Angeles, Return Journey, Why Don't You Dance?

2026

Photo Tex wallpaper

Courtesy of the artist and supported by Photo Elysée, Lausanne

Rapid urban growth transformed Tehran and other major Iranian cities in the 1960s and 1970s. New housing complexes, commercial developments and large-scale planning projects spread across the country with some designed by foreign architects. Among these was a proposed master plan for Tehran that looked explicitly to Los Angeles as a model. Developed by two architects, one Iranian, the other Austrian–American, the plan was only partially realised, although traces of its vision, including the city's highways, remain visible today.

In *Tehran-Los Angeles, Return Journey, Why Don't You Dance?*, Darabi brings this history into the present, pairing photographs taken in Los Angeles in the summer of 2025 with postcards of 1970s Tehran. The resulting visual parallels collapse distinctions between two cities and two moments in time, transforming Los Angeles into a speculative echo of a Tehran that was imagining another future.

Darabi was born in 1981 in Tehran, Iran and currently resides in Paris, France.

Myriam Boulos

Lebanon. What's Ours. 2013 – 2023.

2013–2023

archival pigment prints

Courtesy of the artist

At the age of 16, Boulos started using her camera to get closer to reality. Today she uses photography to explore, defy and resist society. Across her work, Boulos consistently transforms a deeply personal exploration of Lebanon into politically resonant visual narratives, while also reshaping our understanding of photojournalism itself. Her photography gives visibility to those living outside dominant norms, capturing moments of connection and tenderness within a society that often seeks to silence them.

In *Lebanon. What's Ours. 2013 – 2023.*, Boulos offers an uncompromising account of a decade marked by political upheaval, including the October 2019 uprising against government corruption and the devastating Beirut port explosion in August 2020. Her tender photographs of friends and family turn lived experiences into erotic, absurd and sometimes unsettling visions which may otherwise be hidden from view. The body in public space becomes a central theme in Boulos' work: exposed yet poised in the face of State violence, institutional neglect and economic uncertainty.

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By approaching photography as an act of necessity, Boulos remains close to the people, places and realities that matter to her.

Boulos was born in 1992 in Beirut, Lebanon where she currently lives.