

NOHA MOKHTAR PORTFOLIO

EDUCATION

- 2017 PhD Student in Social Anthropology and Critical Media Practice, Harvard University, MA, USA
- 2016 BA in Social Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Bern, CH
- 2014 Political Sciences, ERASMUS Exchange Program, Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2011 BA in Visual Communication (Photography), University of Art and Design Lausanne, CH

EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *Biennale Bregaglia 2020, Promontogno Raumfahrt IV, Langmatt Museum, Baden*
- 2019 *Vordemberge-Gildewart Prize, Alte Fabrik, Rapperswil
There, When the Air Becomes Electric, Centre de la Photographie, Geneva
Audio Guide, St Peter Kirche, Zurich
Product Placement, Coalmine, Winterthur*
- 2018 *Werkschau 2018, Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich
La pensée sauvage, O.T. Raum für für aktuelle Kunst, Lucerne
On the Road, Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau*
- 2017 *Under 30, Ex-Macello, Lugano
Kiefer Hablitzel, Swiss Art Awards, Basel*
- 2016 *Meaning Can Only Grow out of Intimacy, Espace Arlaud, Lausanne*
- 2015 *Bourses de la Ville de Genève, Centre d'art Contemporain, Geneva
When Will You Make Us Happy?, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
Offshore, Belfast Photo Festival, Northern Ireland*

- 2014 *Calderas, Alte Papierfabrik, Landquart
Diversi Muri, Swiss Institute, Rome, Italy
Do you speak tourist?, Musée d'art de Pully*
- 2013 *Cantonale Bern-Jura, Kunstmuseum Thun
Cantonale Berne-Jura, Centre Pasquart Bienne
Kiefer Hablitzel Prize, Swiss Art Awards, Basel
SAS Escale à la Jonction, Usine Kugler, Geneva*
- 2012 *Swiss Design Awards, Bellerive Museum, Zürich
Kiefer Hablitzel Prize, Swiss Art Awards, Basel
Al Fassad/The Corruption, Festival Voies-Off, Arles, France
Bourses de la Ville de Genève, Centre d'art Contemporain, Geneva*
- 2011 *El hob wal melh/Love and Salt, La Nuit des Images, Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne*
- 2010 *Festival Planche(s)-Contact, Deauville, France*

FELLOWSHIPS / AWARDS / RESIDENCIES

- 2020 *Projektbeitrag Bildende Kunst, Kanton Zurich
Projektbeitrag, Volkart Foundation, Winterthur
Soutien à projet, Ville de Lausanne
Soutien à projet, Etat de Vaud
Soutien à projet d'édition, Canton de Genève
Projektbeitrag Stiftung Erna und Curt Burgauer, ZH
Contribution à la création d'oeuvres, Pro Helvetia*
- 2019 *CMP-Mellon Fellowship, Harvard University, USA*
- 2018 *Kulturfonds, Swiss Federal Office of Culture
Werkbeitrag des Kantons Zürich
Study Grant, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva*
- 2017 *Prix Kiefer Hablitzel, Switzerland
Study Grant, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva*

- 2016 *Fulbright Foreign Student Grant, USA*
- 2015 *Bourse d'aide à la création, Fonds Municipal d'Art Contemporain, Geneva*
- 2015 *Research Grant in Lebanon, Pro Helvetia
Artist in residence at Marr.tein, Beirut, Lebanon
Artist in residence, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
Residency in Cairo, Egypt, Pro Helvetia*
- 2014 *Bourse d'aide à la production, FCAC Geneva*
- 2013 *Residency in New York, USA,
Swiss Federal Office of Culture*
- 2012 *Swiss Design Award, Category Photography,
Swiss Federal Office of Culture,*

PUBLICATIONS

- 2021 *Cahiers d'Artistes, Pro Helvetia & Edition Periferia*
- 2021 *La valise égyptienne, Edition HS, Zurich*
- 2020 *Chaque mercredi Caracas, Edition HS, Zurich
Biennale Bregaglia 2020. Ed: Progetti d'arte in Val Bregaglia.
Pour Beyrouth, Fabrikzeitung n°361, Zurich*
- 2019 *Housemate, self-published, Zürich*
- 2018 *Scenes for Balconies, Edition HS, Zürich*
- 2017 *Junge Schweizer Kunst. Kiefer Hablitzel Preis, XIII Edition. Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst*
- 2015 *When Will You Make Us Happy?
With Sahar Suliman, Fabrikzeitung n°309, Zurich*
- 2014 *Do you speak touriste?. Musée d'art de Pully.
Gollion: Infolio.*

Balacona

Eingabe: Werk 1

Saadia, Metal, 60 x 185 cm

Awatef, Metal, 30 x 150 x 50 cm

Magda, Metal and rope, 45 x 180 cm

Noura, Metal, 30 x 180 x 30 cm

DROITE GAUCHE, 2018,

C-print, framed

59.4 x 42 cm

SCENES FOR BALCONIES, 2018

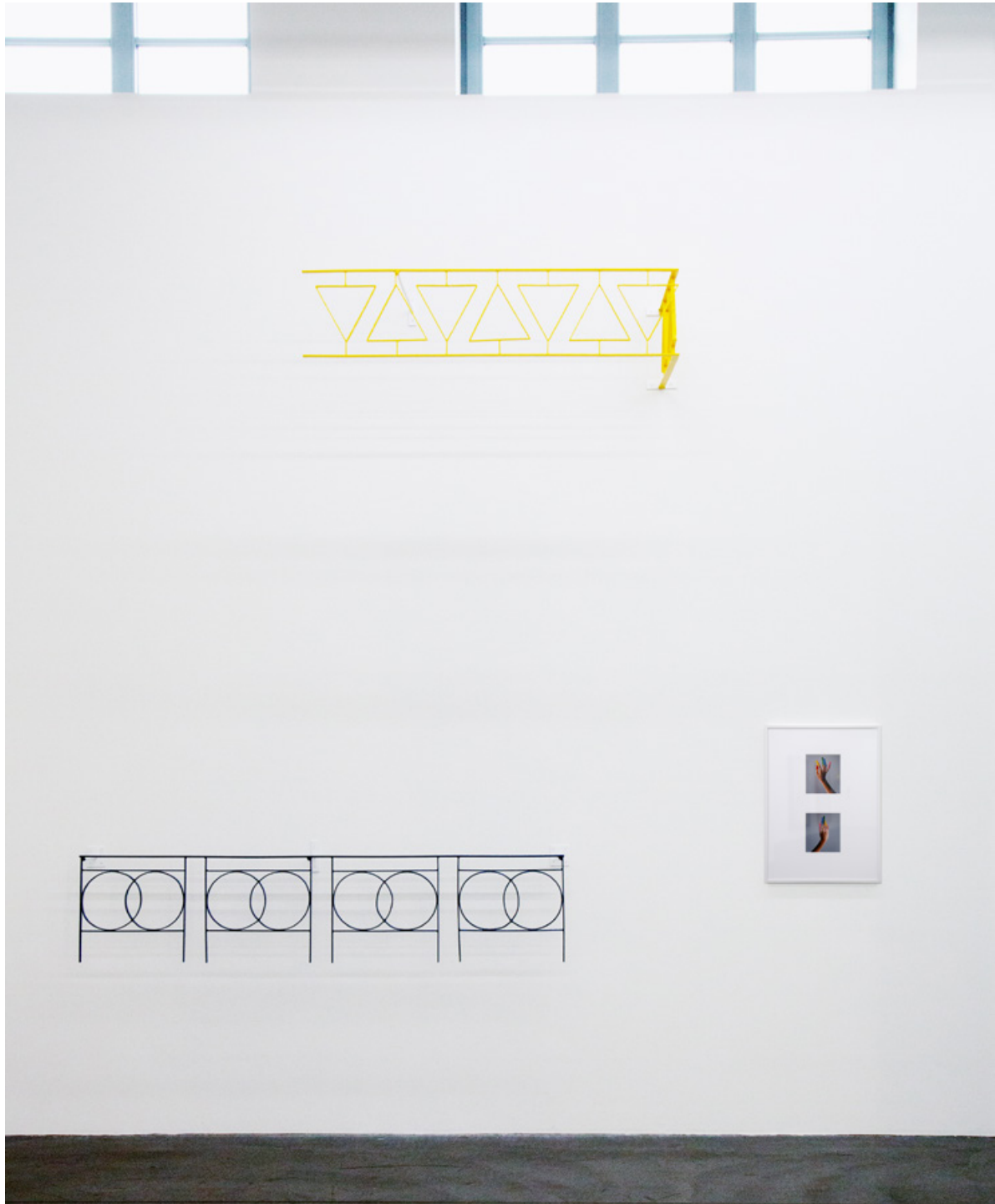
Publication, 64 pages

Exhibitions views:

Werkbeiträge 2018, Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich.

BALACONA is a wall installation that recreates the setting of a façade which becomes the projection surface for possible social interactions. The metal sculptures are replicas of the balustrades decorating my aunts' balconies in a middle-class neighborhood of Cairo. In this work, I am interested in the spatial structure and social meaning of the balcony. Visually exposed to the street but spatially protected through its elevation, the balcony is a space that simultaneously demarcates the interior from the exterior, and allows the crossing between private and public spheres. In Egypt, the balcony is a highly gendered space, where domesticity can be performed in plain sight. It is also a place where people can air their dirty laundry in public. In a visual ellipsis, the fragments of balustrades on the exhibition wall materially evoke the liminal condition of the façade, and the social surveillance at play in a neighborhood. The publication is a collection of fictional dialogs happening on or around balconies. These dialogs are based on interviews, as well as on Egyptian TV series.





DROITE GAUCHE, 2018, C-print, framed, 59.4 x 42 cm





Noura, wall sculpture, metal (pink), 30 x 180 x 30 cm



Awatef, wall sculpture, metal (yellow), 30 x 150 x 50 cm



Saadia, wall sculpture, metal (blue), 60 x 185 cm



Magda, wall sculpture, metal and rope, 45 x 180 cm



SCENES FOR BALCONIES, 2018, Publication, 64 pages. For the visitors to take home.

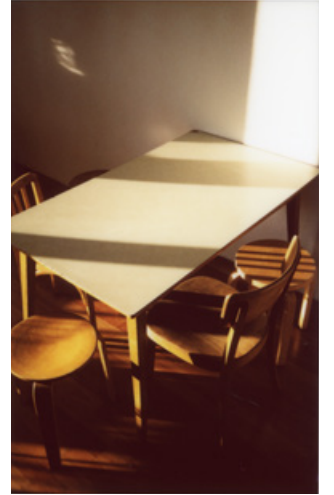
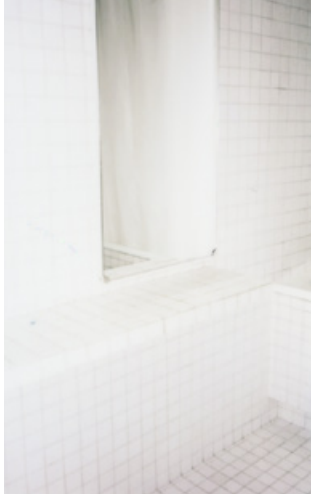
Dolder Waldhaus

Eingabe: Werk 2

Dolder Waldhaus, 2020
From the series Wohnungen (ongoing)
C-Prints
6 photographs, 60 × 40 cm each

In the ongoing work *Wohnungen*, I photograph the interiors of apartments I visit, rent, sublet, often temporarily. This series is from the former hotel Dolder Waldhaus, converted into individual apartments in Zürich.





Dreambox

Eingabe: Werk 3
(Oder eine Auswahl aus dieser Werkgruppe.)

Saga, 2018
C-Print on Baryt paper
120 x 120 cm

Les cousins, 2018
6 Satin pillows
56 x 56 cm each

Les entrées, 2018
Wood and Plexiglas
120 x 70 x 4 cm
120 x 30 x 4 cm
50 x 50 x 4 cm

El beit beita (My house is your house), 2018
C-Print
115 x 115 cm

A discrétion, 2018
C-Prints
6 photographs, 30 x 30 cm each

Exhibition views: Aargauer Kunsthau
(Images:Ulmann Photography)

Dreambox is a growing ensemble of objects and images taken out of an imagined domestic space. These objects and images function simultaneously like templates to be filled or surfaces of projection and vestiges of past scenes. Tabletops have lost their legs, television channels become cushions wearing their names (life, culture, drama, cinema, comedy, family), a photograph representing a series of nesting tables translates into a family portrait.





Les cousins, 2018

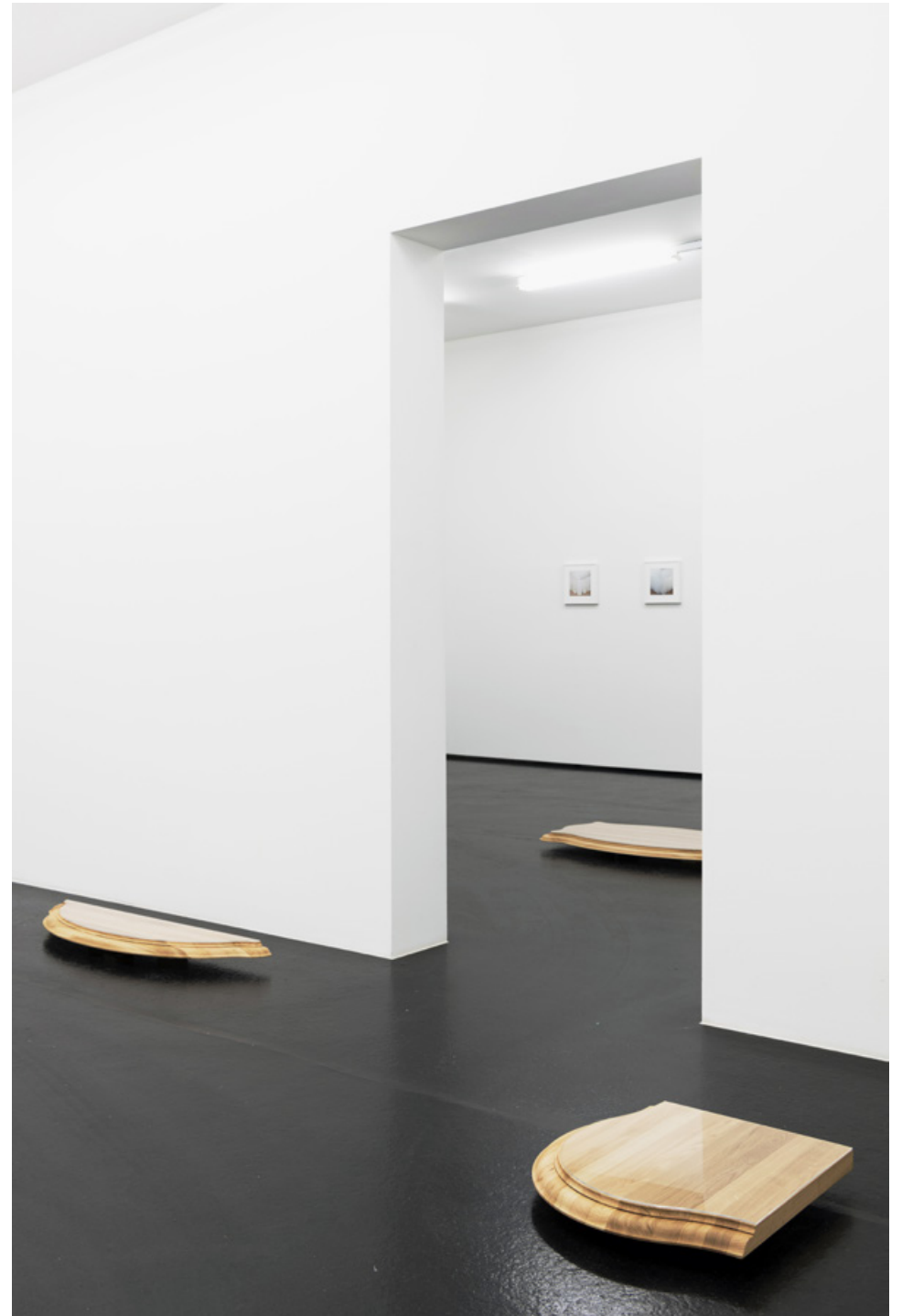


Saga, 2018



Les entrées, 2018

Les entrées, 2018





A discrétion, 2018; Les entrées, 2018





Les entrées, 2018



Les entrées, 2018; El beit beidak (My house is your house), 2018

La valise égyptienne

2021 (October)

Artist book, 160 pages

Edition Hors-Sujet, Zurich

With Lucas Uhlman

La valise égyptienne is an artist book that documents a collection of ceramic objects that resemble miniature bathtubs, and carry lived or invented stories, like souvenirs brought back from travels. The collection is the result of a long-term project, which began in Egypt in 2015. It focuses on the materialization of memories and the historical and cultural construction of artifacts through fictional archaeology.

The transition from a country admired for its seemingly immutable past to a place of political and social renewal has left obvious traces in Cairo since 2011. The infrastructure of tourism for example has itself become a relic. The Egyptian Museum and the Downtown souvenir stores merge and blur the temporality between ancient artifacts and souvenirs, which have become remnants of a fallen era. Under a ten-year-old dust, sphinx and alabaster ashtrays sleep in windows of closed stores as if they had been exhibited there thousands of years ago.

The book critically examines different forms of representation that oscillate between documentary photography and fiction writing, and questions notions of scientific objectivity and reality. The ceramic objects were photographed by the Musée d'Ethnographie in Geneva and „read“ as ethnographic artifacts. The very representation of the objects thus makes ambivalent their cultural value, geographical and temporal origin, as well as their function. In that sense, the project questions Western constructs of history and addresses the urgency of a critical decolonization of practices and forms of representation.





Each of the 39 objects is photographed from three angles. Photography: Johnathan Watts /MEG.



Fragment n°1

The customs officer asked me to sit on the chair in front of his desk. I hesitated for a moment because the chair didn't seem stable. One of the legs was much shorter than the others and someone had performed an orthopedic procedure to keep it in balance. But the officer insisted, and I sat down carefully.

Above our heads, the light was sliced at a steady pace by a three-bladed fan.

When the officer was about to interrogate me, the phone rang and he looked a little annoyed. He answered, whispering something in a dialect that I didn't fully understand. While I tried to listen to what was being said, I thought to myself "keep both options open: you do speak Arabic, you do not speak Arabic."

On my left, there was a window overlooking the hall and I could see the travelers staring at the conveyor belts with dry eyes. The central screen announced: Düsseldorf Unknown, Cairo Landed, Budapest Scheduled, Moscow Landed, Krasnodar Unknown, Geneva Scheduled. There was a loud beep and another belt activated, introducing new luggage. Mostly black or blue suitcases. There was also a large wrapped package, whose shape didn't reveal anything of its content.

I had of course thought about customs. I had hesitated between telling the story or telling a story. I had hesitated for so long that I ran out of time and, not knowing what to do, became confused. I had convinced myself that I would improvise if the situation arose. But now that the situation arose, exactly as expected, no reasonable explanation came to mind. Then, without saying goodbye, the officer put the cordless phone back on its charging station, sat down, and raised his eyes without raising his head. Where do we start? he said, where do we want to start?

Fragment n°10

The desert landscape we cross on our way to Wadi Hitan is minimalist but not modest. The landscape knows itself to be absolutely irresistible, and so we photograph it through the windows of our car. There is nothing else we can do and resisting the miles of beauty would require too much effort. We know that the landscape on the photograph we are about to take will never look as good as the landscape we are about to photograph. We know that the photograph we are about to take will look like all the photographs that we took a few minutes earlier on our journey and all the ones that we will take later as well. At the end, we find ourselves with an infinite monochrome in the gallery of our phones.

Fragment n°12

NO TOUCH ANY
MONUMENTS OR
ANY STRANGE
OBJECT LYING ON
THE GROUND

Fragment n°23

Notes on missing body parts.

The woman's head is surmounted by a cobra and capped by the outstretched wings of a vulture. She wears a long tunic that reveals only her left shoulder, and a cloak, whose left side falls in overlapping folds. The woman's forearms and feet are missing.

The feet of the young boy and the pedestal on which they walk are sculpted in the same block of black marble, making it impossible to flee.



Fieldwork and research in Egypt (Cairo and Fayoum desert), 2015-2019



Fieldwork and research in Egypt (Cairo and Fayoum desert), 2015-2019



Banio, 2020. Projection of a rotating object recorded with photogrammetry. Exhibition view: Crypta of Nossa Dona, Biennale Bregaglia, Promontogno, GR.

Chaque Mercredi Caracas

2020

Artist book, 420 pages

Edition Hors-Sujet, Zurich

With Gregor Huber and Xavier Nueno

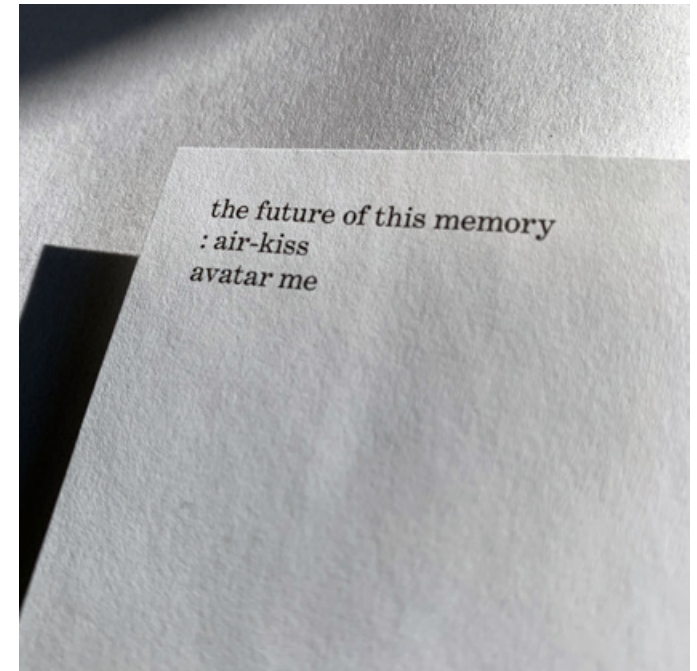
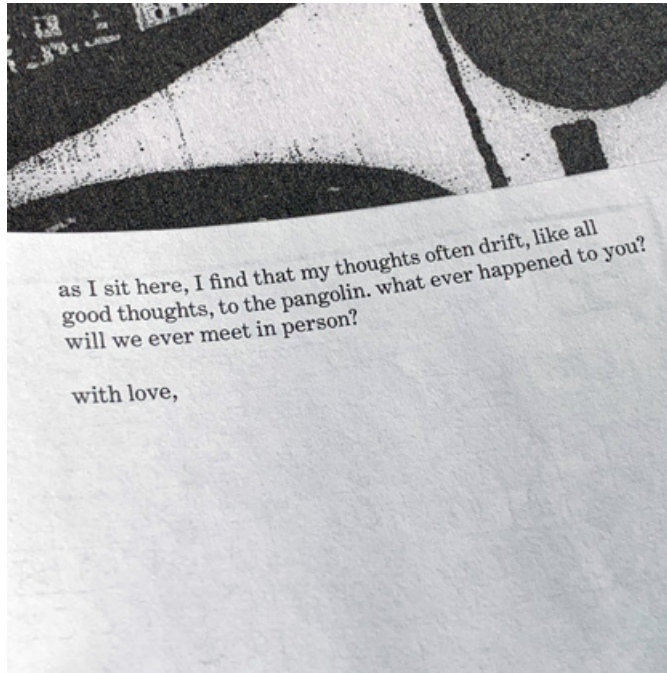
The book presents a sequence of images taken from the travel sections of the newspapers *Le Monde* and *The New York Times*, from the 1960s onwards. Focusing on representations of "the Other" in reportages and ads, the images explore the relation between colonialism and the evolution of mass tourism in the second half of the 20th century: A world that is within reach and ready for consumption.

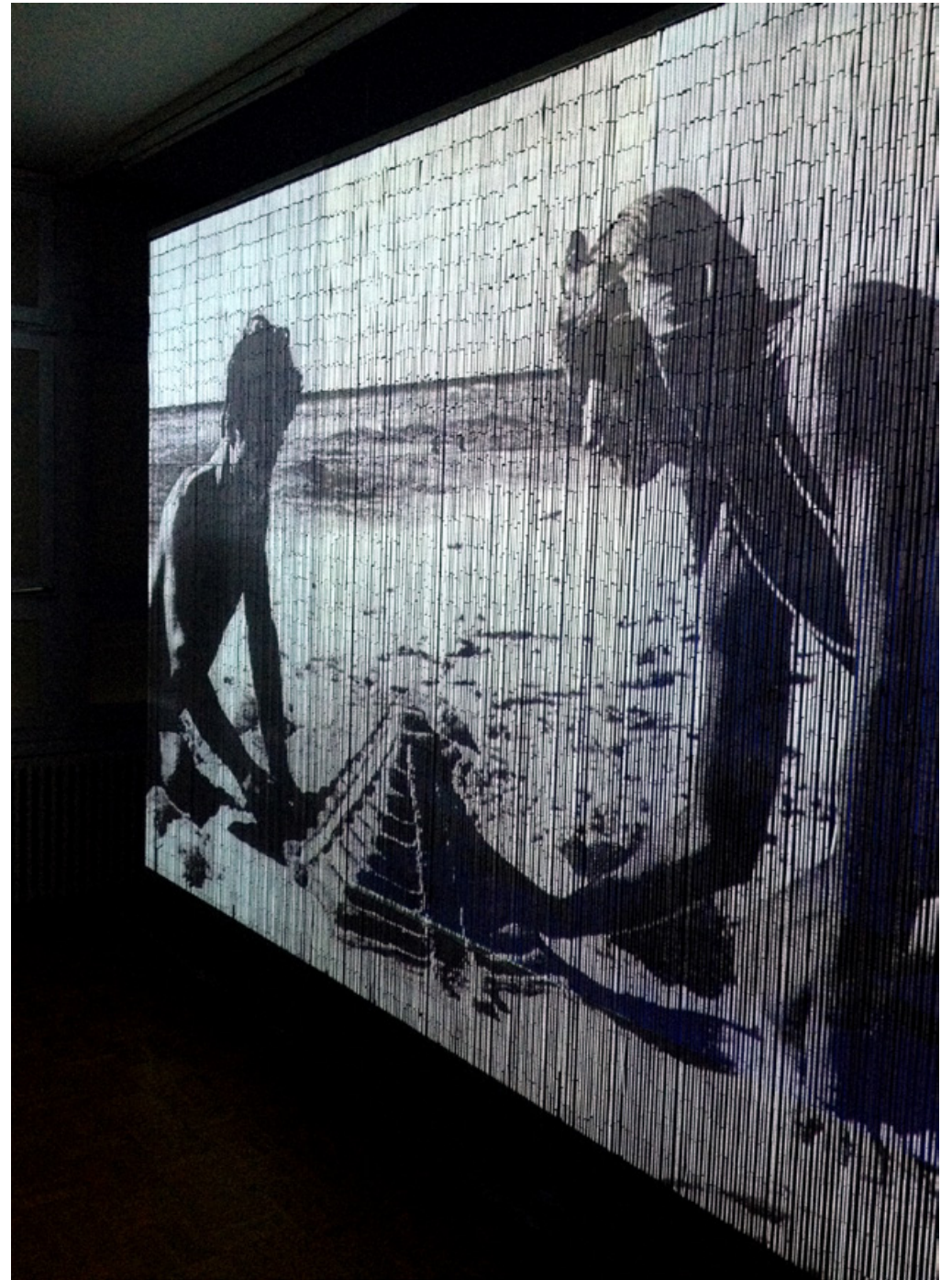
As an insert to the book, «Our Letters Crossed» responds to the images from today's perspective. In a collection of letters by friends in different parts of the world, each one addresses its sender's experience of an unprecedented year. 2020 is an island that didn't exist.

Previously, the sequence of images was presented in a slideshow projection on a bamboo curtain, under the title *La pensée sauvage* in reference to Claude Lévi-Strauss 1961 book.









La pensée sauvage, 2018. Slideshow projection on beaded bamboo curtain, with Gregor Huber. Exhibition views: o.T. Raum für Kunst, Lucerne, Switzerland

American Standard

From the series AMERICAN STANDARD:

No attempt has been made to remove the stains,
2018
172,5 x 119,5 cm, Silkscreen

This came out of a remodel, 2018
119,5 x 85 cm, Silkscreen

Heavy material, 2018
119,5 x 85 cm, Silkscreen

With Gregor Huber

Exhibitions views:
Product Placement, Coalmine Winterthur, 2019.

American Standard is an impersonal archive of photographs of objects for sale on Craigslist, an American classified advertisements website. The objects are passed from one owner to the next, and so are the lives and stories attached to them. The images taken by their owners to sell these items become the documents of that perpetual circulation. Ultimately *American Standard* offers a portrayal of America's neo-liberalism through the micro-level of everyday transactions and material culture.





From left to right: Heavy material; This came out of a remodel; No attempt has been made to remove the stains



Le Bilan du Monde (2017)

AGENT I, 2017

Silkscreen, 180x120 cm

MÉDITERRANÉE, 2017

Inkjet print, framed, 40 x 30 cm

ONE BELT ONE ROAD, 2017

Business card box and 2 cards,
5.5x9cm/7.4x10.5 cm/7.4x10.5 cm

AGENT II, 2017

Silkscreen, 180x120 cm

THE NEW SILK ROAD, 2017

Inkjet print, framed, 30x40 cm

Exhibition views: Swiss Art Awards, Basel
(Images: Guadalupe Ruiz)

„Noha Mokhtar’s work thematizes the complex relationships between East and West via a series of works. Two large copperplate prints showing an iPhone and a tissue box cover, an aerial land photograph, some printed texts, the first a quote from Ancient Greek historian Thucydides (460-395 BC), the second a quote from One Belt, One Road (a development strategy to bolster China’s position on the world stage through a China-Europe rail link), a box for business cards and a colour drawing. The elements respond to each other either formally or by creating associations, constituting a precise installation which questions our relationship to land, forming a political, historic and economic map of the world. Thucydides was already spelling out the fragile balance between East and West, the result of an ongoing power relationship, albeit in 400 BC.“
From: Kiefer Hablitzel Stiftung, 2017



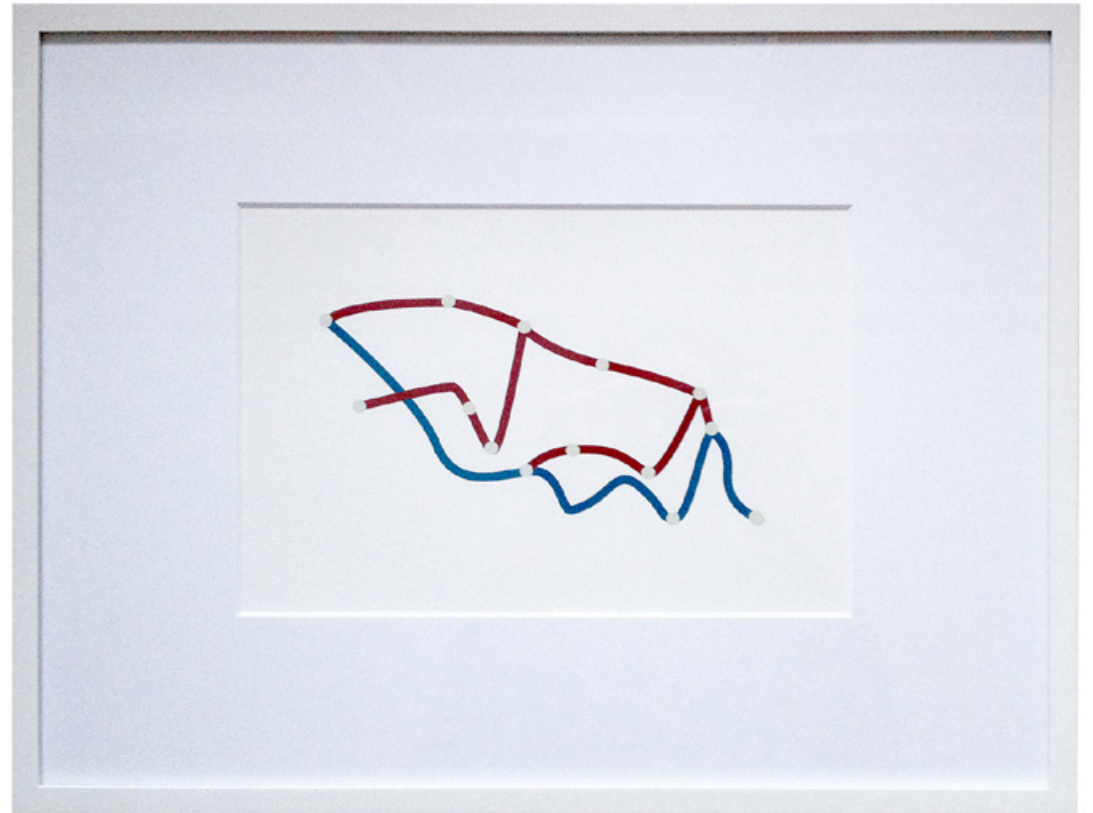




One Belt One Road, 2017



Méditerranée, 2017



The new Silk Road, 2017

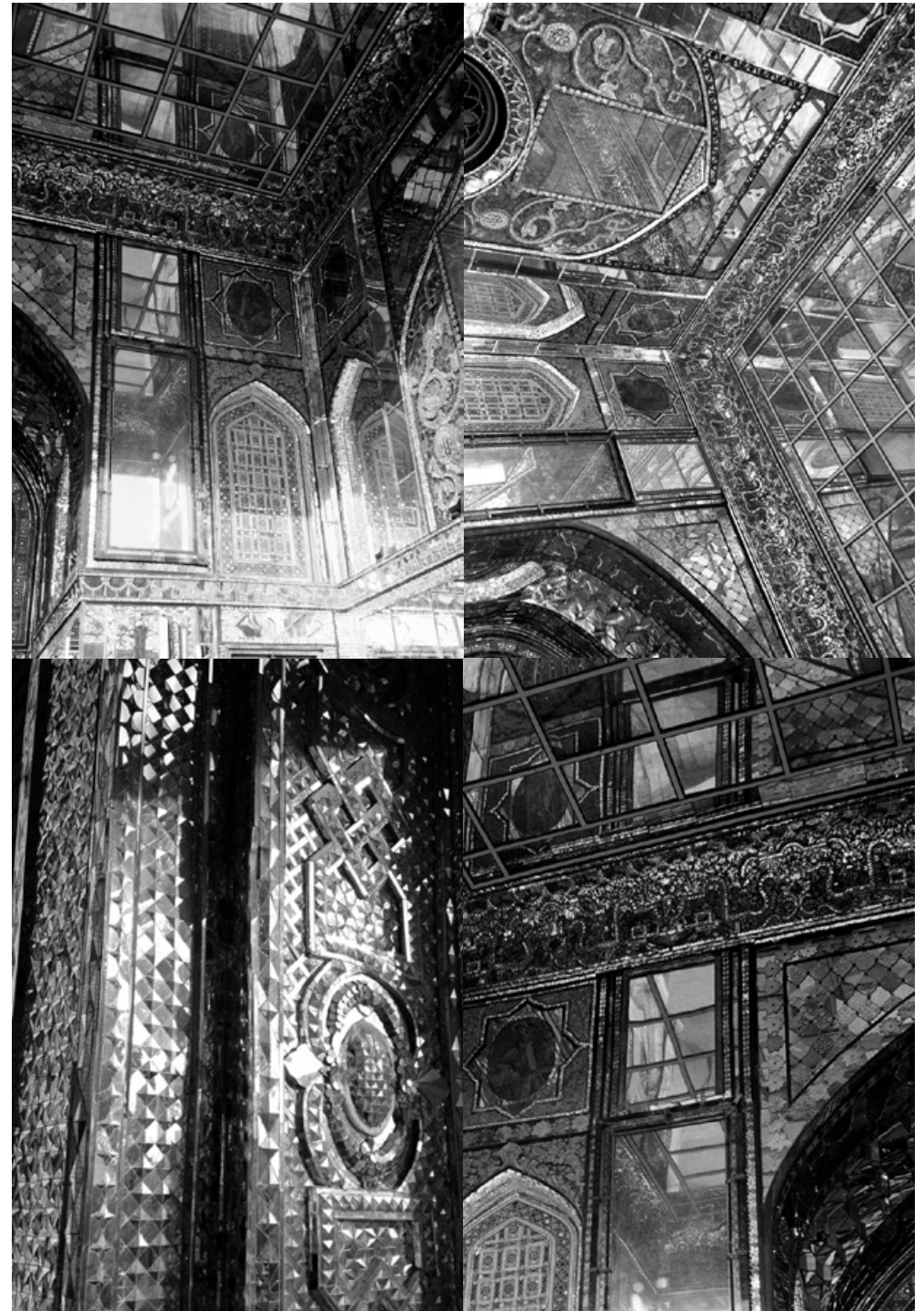
The Aleph

2017

Silkscreen print on mirrors
4 mirrors, 60 x 90 cm each

"All language is a set of symbols whose use among its speakers assumes a shared past. How, then, can I translate into words the limitless Aleph, which my floundering mind can scarcely encompass? Mystics, face with the same problem, fall back on symbols: to signify the godhead, one Persian speaks of a bird that somehow is all birds: Alanus de Insulis, of a sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere; Ezkiel, of a four-faced angel who at one and the same time moves east and west, north and south."

From Jorge Luis Borges, *The aleph and other stories* 1933-1969



Cymae

2016

Plasterboard and wood

314 x 184 cm

With Lucas Uhlmann

Exhibition views:

Meaning Can Only Grow out of Intimacy.

Espace Arlaud, Lausanne

(Images: Julien Gremaud/Les Urbaines)

The cyma –small wave in Ancient Greek– refers to both the horizontal molding situated on the top of Greek columns and to the neutral wall serving to subdivide exhibition spaces. In this site-specific installation, the space has been altered through the horizontal mirroring of the arches in the basement of Espace Arlaud. The simple architectural element becomes, through its very extension, the door or the airplane window to another world.







Calderas

2014

Sand

280 x 160 x 90cm / 280 x 160 x 120cm / 280 x
160 x 150 cm

With Lucas Uhlmann

Exhibition views:

Alte Papierfabrikhalle, Landquart GR

(Images: Sebastian Stadler, Noha Mokhtar)

Three distinctive moulds that recall the shape of pools have been used to form the six sculptures displayed in the exhibition. Instead of water sand replaces what would normally fill the pools, thus creating the soft hills and depressions that have turned what would be pools into islands. The installation explores the effect such objects have on the landscape by provocatively contrasting simulated artificiality with an idealized nature. „Calderas“ is a geological term describing a large volcanic crater that fills with water after the volcanic lava has cooled.





Untitled

Untitled (pyramid)

2012

Straw

540 x 540 x 400 cm

Untitled (from Les boîtes)

2011

Framed C-Print

Exhibition views:

Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva

The pyramid installed on the second floor of the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva was built with 250 straw bales. In a visual response to the sculpture, a framed photograph of a golden kleenex box cover.

„Avant que le gouvernement ne décide des les transformer en un site touristique payant avec des heures d'ouverture et de fermeture, les pyramides étaient un lieu de pique-nique prisé par les familles cairotes. On s'installait sur les pierres pour l'après-midi et on grignotait. On restait souvent jusqu'à la tombée de la nuit.“

„Et soudainement, les moissonneuse-batteuses sont de sortie. Elles vont et viennent balayant les champs dorés de leurs phares puissants. Demain, de la pluie.“



