

Void



Before the Cypress Broke

In partnership with
Beirut Art Residency (BAR)

Ali Cherri, Ayla Hibri, Charbel Haber,
Daniele Genadry, Fiona Ones, Gregory
Buchakjian & Valérie Cachard, Hussein
Nassereddine, Jacques Vartabedian,
Omar Khouri, Salah Missi, Sandrine
Pelletier, Sirine Fattouh & Stéphanie
Dadour, Ziad Antar

The exhibition *Before the Cypress Broke* brings together new and existing works spanning the flourishing artistic period that Lebanon has known in the past years up until its near demise on August 4, 2020.

This unfathomable day, lurking in the background of the city like a shadow, profoundly changed the lives of all Lebanese people - intensifying the already existing distress in the country and the growing despair abroad. The premise of this exhibition was explored in retrospect, with the urge to question: How did we get here?

It borrows its title from a poem by one of the Arab world's greatest contemporary poets Mahmoud Darwish whose poem *The Cypress Broke* resonates as a lament over the death of a cypress, a ruin in the making. The poem is a conversation around grief, its irreversible nature, and the relentless course of life.

The idea of encounters with or around nature is inherent in many of the works in this show, as many artists explore the physical and tangible space, particularly land and sea borders. Oscillating between reality and forced nostalgia, Ziad Antar's maritime journey from the Southern old port of Sidon to the capital Beirut forces the viewer to experience the city from a blurred and distant perspective. In a contrasting approach, *El Autostrad* the video of Sirine Fattouh and Stephanie Dadour loops continuously in a corner, recording a car ride on a single highway that connects the Lebanese-Syrian border from the North all the way down to the Lebanese-Palestinian border in the

South. Other artists in the show have formed poetic conversations with nature over time such as the manipulated landscapes of Daniele Genadry which immortalize a memory that is both familiar and unfamiliar.

Evolving into a complex reflection on the status of preservation through collection and documentation, artist Hussein Nassereddine presents an installation of rescued papers that carry the legacy of an endangered poetry. In the performance-based video *Abandoned Dwellings*. Gregory Buchakjian and Valerie Cachard have archived objects and documents found in abandoned buildings of the post-war era. For the German artist Fiona Ones, preserving a piece of Beirut involved manually embossing paper to mimic the traditional tiles found in these abandoned houses, a testament to its persevering history.

A number of pieces in the exhibition act as messages punctuated by the tensions building through the space. We encounter the missiles landing over Gaza in the plain of night, painted vividly, then deconstructed into pixels in Omar Khouri's works on paper. The work of Jacques Vartabedian depicts the aftermath of the blast, a single figure finds itself lost in a sea of abstracted destruction. For Ali Cherri, whose watercolor drawings also look into the debris left behind, the carcasses of cars become tokens of the trauma.

The exhibition brings together the works of 15 contemporary artists, Lebanese based at home or abroad, as well as international artists whose practices have led to encounter life

in Beirut before the cataclysmic turn of events. Just as the show's title suggests, the exhibition proposes an investigation into a period of time where each of these artists attempts to make sense of a complex history while facing the uncertainty of where to go from here. On August 4, 2020 the cypress broke in Beirut and the sky, to this day, remains incomplete.

Since 2015, the Beirut Art Residency (BAR) is dedicated to supporting the production and dissemination of contemporary art through residencies, local exhibitions and public interventions. BAR has added profound vibrancy, sustainability and spotlight to the local art scene, creating bridges between the artists in Beirut and the global art community.

* The proceeds from the sales of works will go towards the participating artists and the BAR Support Fund

BAR Support Fund

The BAR Support Fund will provide local emerging artists with small grants in order to assist their production needs for 2021. The Support Fund will first and foremost enable emerging artists - including fine art students - to cover the costs of materials and logistics associated with art production and proliferation.

For more information please visit their website at www.beirutartresidency.com.

Artists' Work and Biographies

ALI CHERRI

Description

Crushed looks at icons of mobility and speed that have been turned into debris after the Beirut explosion on the 4th of August 2020. These crushed cars become artefacts of the disaster, now rendered dysfunctional. Their hard metal smashed like a tin can, making them barely recognizable. By removing the cars from their context, they become tokens of the trauma, functioning as a memory trigger. The watercolour medium accentuates the volatile nature of the debris.

Biography

Ali Cherri is a video and visual artist. His recent work looks at the role historical objects play in the construction of national narratives. His recent exhibitions include *Minds Rising*, *Spirits Tuning*, 13th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, *The Gatekeepers*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille - Manifesta, France, *Trembling Landscapes*, Eye Film Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and *In our Veins Flow Ink and Fire*, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kerala, India. *Comme un parfum d'aventure*, Musée d'art Contemporain de Lyon, France, *La vie des tables*, Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac, Ivry sur Seine, France.

AYLA HIBRI

Description

By seeking to turn the ordinary into the distinctive, Ayla Hibri finds meaning in subtleties and phenomena ranging from the mundane to the cosmic. "One comes across these unfortunate interventions more often than not," notes the artist. This series of photographs carry the weight of the price one has to pay and the damage that will need to be reversed. They capture the arrogance and negligence that exists within man and show ever so clearly, the beautiful, the ugly and who is to blame.

Biography

Ayla Hibri is a visual artist with a BA from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts and a degree in Photography from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). For the last decade Hibri has been in constant travel, shifting environments to maintain a continuum of displacement and discovery. Through the act of walking, exploring, and active observation, she has collected an expansive archive of visual data on the psychogeography of places and aspects of the human condition. These gather the shapes of universal truths which traverse the boundaries of the political and geographical. She has published two books, *A Palm Tree Bows To The Moon* (2019- published by Kaph Books) and *The Real Prince* (2016- published by OODEE) and has exhibited widely in several galleries, institutions and festivals worldwide. Her photographic series have also been featured in different publications

including *The Guardian*, *The Wire*, *Brownbook Magazine*, *Dazed* and *Confused*, *Kaleidoscope* and more.

CHARBEL HABER

Description

The stars and planets are aligned
The insignificance of things to come is overwhelming
The murder/suicide/sacrifice of a new/old deity is upon us
A queen heads to the guillotine
The universe is a voyeur
It watches itself through the eyes of the living, the dead and the born-again
It consumes itself
It plays with itself
It is happening now
Flowers are blooming in pixels and dreams
The universe is a thought
Stop looking for the sun
The universe is pure

Biography

Charbel Haber is a Lebanese musician, performer and composer from Beirut. Co-founder and member of longstanding Lebanese post-rock group *Scrambled Eggs*, Haber's work encompasses a wide range of disciplines and styles such as film, video art and theatre, both as a solo artist and as a member of *Scrambled Eggs*, *Malayeen* (Discrepant, 2014), *Johnny Kafta Anti Vegetarian Orchestra* (Discrepant, 2016) and *The Bunny Tylers* (Ruptured, 2017), *Good Luck in Death* (Nahal, 2018). As a solo artist, Haber has collaborated with various visual artists and composed music for a variety of film and theatre performances, both in and outside his native Lebanon.

DANIELE GENADRY

Description

The *Familiar Mountains* series exhibited belongs to a larger project titled *Afterglow*, where Genadry collected a group of 20 photographs taken over ten years, of a mountain view from Kartaba, a town off the coast of Lebanon. The photographs were taken at different times of day and positions, through varying lights and perspectives, creating images that are at once familiar and strange. Through each capture, the artist attempted to see a very familiar view and mountain range that she had been photographing for over 10 years, as if she were seeing it for the first time. In creating that effect, Genadry played with the distribution of light and color in each photograph, and screen printed them in black and white on mylar, a translucent material which changed appearance according to the light conditions in which it was viewed, in order to destabilise the familiar view. Thus creating a series of images that could be seen through their differences and with an attention that is given to unknown or strange sights.

Biography

Daniele Genadry works with various media to examine how distance, light and movement affect visual experiences. Her practice is focused around the relationship of painting and photography, and through it she considers the potential of an image to generate its own temporality (light), and how a mediated field of vision can sensitize our perception.

Genadry studied at Dartmouth College, NH and at the Slade School of Art, London. She has participated in residencies at the Bronx Museum, Anderson Ranch Art Center (USA), Fondazione Ratti (Italy), and Frans Masereel Centrum (Belgium). In 2013-14 she was the Abbey Scholar at the British School at Rome, and is currently a fellow at the Bogliasco Foundation (IT, 2019). She has previously exhibited at the Beirut Art Center, Sharjah Biennial 13, Biennial del Sur, Gypsum Gallery, Taymour Grahne Gallery, SMBA, Bronx Museum and Fondazione Pastificio Cerere. Genadry is an assistant professor of studio arts at the American University of Beirut.

FIONA ONES

Description

A former resident of the Beirut Art Residency, Fiona Ones started a dialogue with Beirut which continues to this day. Walking down the vibrant streets of the lively, dynamic but also wounded city, the artist was constantly observing and interacting with nature. When thinking of this body of work, Ones remembers what Beirut had taught her the most: That there is always life and growth where you would least expect it. Plants emerge from ruins and cracks in the streets, inactive construction sites and abandoned houses. This is how nature becomes another proof of Lebanon's history, as it always finds its path for growth and tells its own story about memory and time, both immortal but constantly moving. Using an embossing technique on found paper from the 60s, Ones aimed to

recreate patterns typical of traditional Middle Eastern tiles mimicking the ground on which nature spreads its seeds. The sculptural result consists of superimposed torn papers, which reflect the layers of the fragile but deeply rooted city.

Biography

Fiona Ones is a German versatile artist working with photography and pointillistic needle drawings on paper. Her stories are about perceiving reality and overcoming the white noise of everyday life. A collection of records, translated accounts of lived experiences. Up close, one can't help feeling the patience, and passage of time, represented in the creation of her artwork. The repetitive dotting of her drawings combined with her journeys to places unfettered by humanity, are represented by works that are meditative reminders of our place in the natural world. Ones studied Photography and Art at Parsons the New School for Design in New York and is currently working between Berlin and Munich.

GREGORY BUCHAKJIAN & VALÉRIE CACHARD

Description

From 2012 to 2015, Valérie Cachard and Gregory Buchakjian have collected in Beirut's abandoned buildings objects and documents left there by the inhabitants, illegal occupiers or by nature. 700 elements were cleaned up, photographed and filed, with the idea of returning them to their rightful owners or their heirs

or to the city via a public institution. *Abandoned Dwellings. Archive* is a filmed performance that was created in 2018 in the context of the exhibition *Abandoned Dwellings. Display of Systems*, at Beirut's Sursock Museum. Their latest collaboration *Agenda 1979* (2021) is a continuation of these archive-based interventions produced in Lebanon.

Biography

Gregory Buchakjian

Director of the School of Visual Arts at Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts-Alba, Gregory Buchakjian is an art historian and interdisciplinary visual artist. His exploration of abandoned dwellings led to a PhD dissertation at Sorbonne Université (2016), solo exhibitions at Sursock Museum, Beirut (2018) and Villa Empain, Brussels (2019) and the publication *Abandoned Dwellings, A History of Beirut* (Beirut, Kaph Books: 2018). He was part of the first Lebanese Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale and in 2019, he co-organized the 2nd Alba Cinema Encounters "Filming in Times of War, 1975-1990" for which he produced the installation *Where do Filmmakers go?* Member of the advisory committee of the Saradar Collection (2012-2019), he took part in juries including Sursock Museum Salon d'Automne (2009), Boghossian Prize (2012), Beirut Art Center Exposure (2013), Beirut Art Residency (2017) and Arab Documentary Photography Program (2019).

Valérie Cachard

Author of novels - *Déviations et autres détours* (2016), plays - *Matriochka ou l'art de s'évider-* (2015) and texts accompanying art projects - *Nos âmes en chantier* with Saïd Baalbaki and *Géographie du printemps* with François Sargologo, Valérie Cachard is also an actor. Her recent works include *Histoire de la poule et de l'œuf* (2018), *The Table of Confidences*, an interactive intervention for a single spectator at Sursock Museum, Beirut (2019) and *Abandoned Dwellings, Archive*, a filmed performance with Gregory Buchakjian displayed at Sursock Museum (2018), University of California, Irvine (2019) and Villa Empain, Brussels (2019). Recipient of the 2019 RFI-Theatre Award for Victoria K, Delphine Seyrig et moi ou la Petite Chaise jaune, the 2011 Etel Adnan Award for Women Playwrights and the 2005 Young Francophone Writer Prize and, she is the Co-President of the International Commission of Francophone Theatre.

HUSSEIN NASSEREDDINE

Description

These lengths of paper carry poems, based on lost poetry. Traditionally, Arabic poems follow one of sixteen metric systems, called seas, which structure the rhythm of a poem. They are written in a form of binary—between still and moving sounds. Each sea varies in length and intensity: soft and languid metrics are used for romantic poetry; extended, thoughtful metrics for long descriptions; urgent, tightly-paced metrics for war poems. *The Book of Drowning* is inspired

by the rituals of poetry anthologists, who keep leaves of colored paper inside poetry books, with the metrics written down, to identify to which sea a poem belongs, as well as errors and variations. Slotted inside books, the edge of these papers jut from under the cover, over time fading from exposure to the sun, as light leaves an imprint on their surface.

The work is composed of three of these papers, found in books that survived the burning of a library in Beirut during the civil war. Alongside these papers, an index card from the same library, with titles of some of the other books that did not survive.

Biography

Hussein Nassereddine lives and works in Beirut. His work in installation, writing, video and performance originates from a practice around language that builds fragile monuments - some verbal, some sonic, some tactile - rooted in collective histories and resources of poetry, ruins, construction and image-making. Nassereddine participated in Ashkal Alwan's HomeWorkspace program in 2018, and in 2020, he published *How to see the columns as palm trees*, the seventh book in the *Kayfa ta* series.

JACQUES VARTABEDIAN

Description

A figure lying is blended in a complex environment, becoming one, stabilizing and rendering a chaotic motion more stable and predictable. The work reflects the current uncertain

situation in Lebanon. It questions the creation of order out of randomness and the relationship between visual representations and contemporary socio-political situations.

Biography

Jacques Vartabedian is a Lebanese-Armenian artist born in Beirut, Lebanon, where he currently works and lives. He holds a BA in Fine Arts and a Master's degree in Painting from the Lebanese Institute of Fine Arts. Jacques has participated in numerous solo and collective exhibitions locally and internationally. He was part of the BJCEM young artists biennale in Milan, Italy (2015), the Hong Kong Art Central (2016), Beirut Art Fair (2017 and 2019), the 33rd Salon d'Automne at Sursock Museum in Beirut (2018), and the Contemporary Art Biennale at Macam Museum in Aalita, Lebanon (2019). He has won numerous awards including the Art on Board Beirut painting prize by Saradar Foundation in 2015 and the Boghossian Foundation's painting prize in 2016, followed up by an Art Residency at Villa Empain Brussels in 2018.

OMAR KHOURI

Description

Insignificance is symmetrical. Darkness is a substance; matter and energy. The invisible hand of artificial intelligence gently molds us into paper clips. 350 million light years away, 2 spiral galaxies intertwine.

Biography

Omar Khouri is an interdisciplinary artist working with painting, comics and music. In 2006, he co-founded Samandal Comics, the first experimental comics collective in the Middle East credited for starting the recent comic book revolution in the Arab world. Omar's work has been exhibited and is held in collections around the world including Lebanon, the UK, the US, Japan, and across Europe. Recent shows include *The Left Hand of Darkness* (2019 - 2020) at the BAR Project Space, Beirut, *Glass* (2018 - 2019) at the Park Gallery, London, *Exhibitionist* (2018), a site-specific intervention at La Vitrine, Beirut and *Face Value: Portraiture* (2018) a group show at Saleh Barakat Gallery, Beirut.

SALAH MISSI

Description

In a country that appears to be doomed by an endless cycle of socio-political unrest, hopelessness is inevitable and denial is the only means of survival. The figures depicted in the drawings choose to block their vision, shutting everything around them including their minds and their hearts. They represent the human condition that is transferred through time and all the sufferings that come with the feeling of being trapped in an endless cycle of misery. One that they can't quite seem to break out of, and any thought outside of it remains a thought, from cradle to grave.

Biography

Salah Missi is an artist and architect born in Saida, Lebanon. He has a BA and a Masters degree in Architecture, as well as a background in art and design. While designing for human comfort, he developed a curiosity for the Human behavior, ultimately making it the main form of expression of his art. His work revolves around "us" (or humans in the Arab world), questioning the unwritten rules of society and the impact of the corrupted rulers on their lives. A human in such society is portrayed in a series of figures shown in a state of helplessness and despair, "an endless cycle we're sentenced to live in" he states. Despite the traditional approach and medium he uses to produce his figures, the resulting compositions isolate the subject and create a negative space around the figures, stripping away all details related to its surrounding environment. By shedding the light on the subject, Missi creates a depth of emotion that makes the figure pop out of its two dimensional boundaries.

SANDRINE PELLETIER

Description

Words and poetry, particularly Arabic poetry, are a major influence in Pelletier's practice. The artist was already familiar with Mahmoud Darwish's work, particularly his poem *The Cypress Broke*, and the tryptic created for the exhibition arose directly from it. *The Sky today is Complete / Because the Cypress Broke / The Sky today is Incomplete* works as

a mirror, without a beginning and without nor an end. Fire is at the heart of Pelletier's works. She thrives with alterations, particularly those caused by burns, developing a palette of shades of black, as a way to produce a natural patina acting as an echo of the aesthetic of abandonment, degradation and the passage of time.

Biography

From Lausanne to Vienna, from Beirut to Cairo where she settled shortly after the start of the Arab Spring, Sandrine Pelletier attends the sounds of the various national political waves. As a privileged witness to moments of calm and fury, she adapts her relationship to time and life by immersing herself in the stories of places and people. A contextual immersion which is accompanied each time by a risk price where experimentation fully finds its meaning and has a lasting influence on its productions. The artist's romantic aesthetic, sometimes tragic, is inspired by the expression of raw energies, the ineluctable passage of time and the fragility of beings and things.

SIRINE FATTOUH & STÉPHANIE DADOUR

Description

Two cameras were placed in a car while driving along a Lebanese highway connecting north to south, from the Lebanese-Syrian border to the Lebanese-Palestinian border. The journey takes place in one attempt, following the rhythm of a typical day. It takes a little over 200 km or 4 hours

without traffic, to discover a set of places linked by a road, a receptacle of multiple identities.

Ashkal Alwan Production, Post-production supported by Institut Français du Liban.

Biography

Sirine Fattouh is a visual artist based between Paris and Beirut. Her polymorphic work is concerned with representing peoples' histories through various mediums. Through her own and other memories collected from testimonies, she explores the complex relationship to her country of origin and the consequences of conflicts and wars on peoples' everyday lives. In her most recent work, she addresses issues around gender and queer identity through drawing, sculpture, and installation. Starting from her childhood dreams and memories, Fattouh creates a personal mythology of animals, characters, and creatures. Fattouh holds a PhD in Visual Arts and Aesthetics from University Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne (UFR04) and a Master degree from École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts of Paris Cergy (ENSAPC).

Stéphanie Dadour is Associate Professor at École Nationale Supérieure d'architecture of Paris-Malaquais (member of Laboratoire ACS and Laboratoire MHA-evt). Since her doctorate in architecture, her work is at the intersection of architecture and politics: architecture and feminism, architecture and migrations, architecture and alterity. She investigates these topics through historical and archival research, using oral history, drawing and

observation as methodological tools. Her research led her to collaborate with different institutions (Université de Montréal, Columbia University, Centre Pompidou Paris) and to teach at several architecture schools in France and Lebanon. Since 2019, she is awarded a fellowship at the Institut Convergences Migrations in Paris.

ZIAD ANTAR

Description

A gaze from the horizon, from Saida to Beirut. Beirut is a city where monuments cannot thrive. It is experienced in the form of a blurred knowledge. One that keeps escaping the memory, that lacks the tangible, the concrete... What it leaves you with is a thought; an idea of a city, its vibrancy, its intricacies... and a fiction of it you once created in your imagination before you even encountered it.

Biography

Ziad Antar is a Lebanese video artist and photographer. Antar works with different photographic material - such as expired negatives defying the technological advances of digital photography - and collections of archival images. Focusing on the praxis behind the production and the visual quality of an image, his approach revolves around questioning the nature of the photographic medium, its constraints and limitations. In the face of the porosity of artistic and geographic boundaries, Antar's explorations aim to inscribe themselves within a dynamic interaction of places, cultures, memories and disciplines.

His work has been widely exhibited in several institutions and biennials including Palais de Tokyo, Centre Pompidou, Sharjah Art Foundation, The New Museum, among others.

List of Works

Gallery 1

Sandrine Pelletier

The Cypress (Complete), Burned MDF wood, varnish, 20 x 30 cm, 2021. Unique

The Cypress, Burned MDF wood, varnish, 20 x 30 cm, 2021. Unique

The Cypress (Incomplete), Burned MDF wood, varnish, 20 x 30 cm, 2021. Unique

Ziad Antar

Intensive Beirut, from the sea between Saida and Beirut, Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Matt Fibre, 33.3cm x 50cm, 2014. Edition: 3

Ayla Hibri

Everlasting Massacre, Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag, 85 x 85 cm, 2018. Edition: 3

Everlasting Residue, Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag, 60 x 38.65 cm, 2017. Edition: 3

Charbel Haber

Your Fondness for Perfect Bodies is Sinister, Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag, 40 x 30 cm, 2020. Unframed. Edition: 3

Fresh Calls for Fresh Flesh, Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag, 40 x 30 cm, 2020. Unframed. Edition: 5

At Dusk we Retreat, Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag, 40 x 30 cm, 2020. Unframed. Edition: 5

A Tragedy is Overdue, Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag, 40 x 30 cm, 2020. Unframed. Edition: 5

Daniele Genadry

Familiar Mountains 14.22, Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Familiar Mountains 17.55, Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Familiar Mountains 11.11, Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Familiar Mountains 14.12, Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Familiar Mountains 16.44, Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Afterglow (purple), Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Afterglow (yellow haze), Screenprint on Mylar, 28 x 35.5 cm, 2013. AP from edition of 2

Sirine Fattouh & Stéphanie Dardour

From Syria to Palestine: El Autostrad', Video Installation in collaboration with Stéphanie Dadour, 2017

Gallery 2

Fiona Ones

The measurement of change we call time, Embossment on found paper from the 60s. Layers of 8 pieces, 48 x 66.5 cm, 2020. Edition 11 of 12

Hussein Nassereddine

The Complete Uncredited Works: The Book of Drowning, 2018
Sunlight and pencil on carbon paper, 70 cm x 100 cm
Pencil on index card, 27 cm x 18.5 cm

Ali Cherri

Crushed, Watercolor drawings, diptych, 38 x 38 cm each, 2021. Unframed.

Omar Khouri

The Dark Forest II
Gouache on Paper, 77.5 cm x 57.5 cm, 2021. Unique

The Dark Forest III
Gouache on Paper, 77.5 cm x 57.5 cm, 2021. Unique

The World's Smallest Violin VI (Gaza at Night), Gouache on Paper, 57.5 cm

x 77.5 cm, 2021. Unique
The World's Smallest Violin V (Gaza at Night), Gouache on Paper, 57.5 cm x 77.5 cm, 2021. Unique

NGC 5256, Gouache on Paper, 57.5 cm x 77.5 cm, 2021. Unique

Salah Missi

Amorphic Face no.x,
Charcoal and Pastel on paper, 28 x 28 cm each, 2019. Unique

Jacques Vartabedian

Prelude to Reversal, Acrylic on Canvas, 155 x 156 cm, 2020

Education Space

Gregory Buchakjian + Valérie Cachard

Valérie Cachard and Gregory Buchakjian
Abandoned Dwellings. Archive, 2018
Produced, directed and edited by Malek Hosni
Music: Sary Moussa
Texts pronounced in Arabic, English and French
Duration: 10 min"

Void is delighted to partner with the Beirut Art Residency (BAR) on the exhibition *Before the Cypress Broke*, a fundraising exhibition that was initiated in response to the recent catastrophic events that have taken place in Beirut, Lebanon.

Bringing together works by contemporary Lebanese artists and past BAR artists-in-residence, the exhibition will combine works on paper, photography and video works depicting personal investigations of artists in relation to the city.

The title of the show refers to a poem by Palestinian poet and author Mahmoud Darwish entitled *The Cypress Broke*, in which the aftermath of an event is being questioned while life continues its course.

Responding to the escalating landscape of socio-political events, the works in the exhibition form a narrative of their own, reaching up to this year's tipping point. *Before the Cypress Broke* explores the tensions, ruins, and monuments that characterise the country and have become definitive of the overall region throughout the past decades.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a film programme as well as a digital communication programme.

Ali Cherri, Ayla Hibri, Charbel Haber, Daniele Genadry, Fiona Ones, Gregory Buchakjian & Valérie Cachard, Hussein Nassereddine, Jacques Vartabedian, Omar Khouri, Salah Missi, Sandrine Pelletier, Sirine Fattouh & Stéphanie Dadour, Ziad Antar

Before the Cypress Broke

**Void Gallery, Derry
17 April–5 June 2021**

**Online preview 17 April
6–8pm**

Acknowledgements

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Before the Cypress Broke is presented in partnership with the Beirut Art Residency (BAR).

Void Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council Northern Ireland, Department for Communities, Derry City and Strabane District Council, The National Lottery Community Fund, Enkalon Foundation, Ragdoll Foundation, COVID 19 Charities Fund, the Arts Society, Art Fund, and Garfield Weston Foundation.

THE CYPRESS BROKE

By Mahmoud Darwish

The cypress broke like a minaret, and slept on
the road upon its chapped shadow, dark, green,
as it has always been. No one got hurt. The vehicles
sped over its branches. The dust blew
into the windshields ... / The cypress broke, but
the pigeon in a neighboring house didn't change
its public nest. And two migrant birds hovered above
the hem of the place, and exchanged some symbols.
And a woman said to her neighbor: Say, did you see a storm?
She said: No, and no bulldozer either ... / And the cypress
broke. And those passing by the wreckage said:
Maybe it got bored with being neglected, or it grew old
with the days, it is long like a giraffe, and little
in meaning like a dust broom, and couldn't shade two lovers.
And a boy said: I used to draw it perfectly,
its figure was easy to draw. And a girl said: The sky today
is incomplete because the cypress broke.
And a young man said: But the sky today is complete
because the cypress broke. And I said
to myself: Neither mystery nor clarity,
the cypress broke, and that is all
there is to it: the cypress broke!