

Sign up for our free daily newsletter:

Subscribe!

12 SATURDAY
OCTOBER 2019

Search...



Subscribe Now >

Login

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON



Culture

Oct. 12, 2019 | 12:07 AM

Gazing back on a war, its recollection

More from
Jim QuiltyFrom Tesco to occupied
PalestineIraqisms: The shape of
Iraqi art todayMemories of Germany
in '80s Beirut

RSS



FOLLOW



EMAIL



PRINT



SHARE

Jim Quilty | The Daily Star

HARET HREIK, Lebanon: "(Re)constructed Uncertainties," the three-piece exhibition currently up at The Hangar, the exhibition hall of UMAM Documentation and Research, looks back at Israel's 2006 war against this country. Sandra Schafer's two documentary-inflected installations and found photo series aren't concerned with the 34-day conflict as such. Rather they examine how Hezbollah - the Israeli state's principal adversary in 2006 - has managed the reproduction of its narrative of the conflict.

LIVE NEWS

VIEW ALL

El Hassan opens new ISF center in Sidon
8 minutes ago

Turkey-backed Syrian rebels seize Ras al-Ain town center
15 minutes ago

Turkish forces take Syrian town Ras al-Ain: defense ministry
30 minutes ago

Senior U.N. official commends 'critical' UNIFIL
1 hour ago

Bus driver arrested for attempted sexual assault
2 hours ago

Turkey intensifies bombardment around Syrian town
2 hours ago

Bassil to Cairo for emergency Syria meeting
2 hours ago

...

Entities
Locations & Natural Formations
People
Political Group
Stock Market
Countries
Artifacts
Events
Companies

Two spaces preoccupy the artist in these works. One is Mleeta, Hezbollah’s Resistance Museum, officially known as the “Tourist Landmark of the Resistance.” The other is Haret Hreik, one of three municipalities south of Beirut (Dahiyeh, “the suburbs,” in local parlance). More than anywhere else, Haret Hreik is seen as Hezbollah central, so it sustained the heaviest air and sea bombardment in the summer of 2006 and was the focus of the most assertive reconstruction program, implemented not by the Lebanese state but by Hezbollah.

“Mleeta,” 2016, is comprised of a pair of adjoining screens and a pair of speakers. The looped two-channel video commences with a Google Earth-style satellite map of the globe that zooms on the site in Iqlim al-Tuffah that titles the work.

The right screen shows a cluster of young hijab-garbed girls watching one of the films that’s part of the Mleeta experience. The left screen seems to show what they’re watching, a documentary - told from the resistance’s perspective - on the recent history of this hilltop location, which had been a Hezbollah outpost since before the 2006 war.

At one point the left screen shows a cluster of men in the darkened terraces, as if the two audiences (one all-female, the other all-male) were watching one another.

Mleeta’s introductory video is stridently high concept. Schafer effectively juxtaposes the work’s early sequences - Hasan Nasrallah’s welcome speech followed by file footage of combat, accompanied by musical bombast - with hushed, fixed frame shots from the museum exhibition, taken on a day when there were few visitors to obstruct the exhibited objects.

A circular viewing deck looks down upon carefully arrayed shards of concrete, festooned with wrecks of various types of materiel. Most prominent is an armored personnel carrier and a tank - its cannon (or some cannon-like protuberance) amusingly tied into a knot. Later, after a handheld camera navigates a dim subterranean corridor, there’s a 50-calibre gun emplacement.

The spent weapons and the past war it evokes seem incongruous alongside the quiet of the museum’s location (cicadas, birds and a prop plane flying overhead dominate the sound design) and the natural beauty of the surroundings.

“Mleeta” and “Constructed Futures: Haret Hreik,” the second installation in “(Re)constructed Uncertainties,” debuted in the Forum Expanded section of the Berlin International Film Festival, in 2016 and 2017 respectively. The Forum’s website describes Schafer’s research-based practice as addressing “urban and transregional spaces, history and visual politics.”

As the exhibition materials inform you, the artist was in Lebanon for a couple of years (2014-16) researching what she terms the intersections of “architecture, geopolitical spaces and propaganda.”

4TH EDITION
Beirut 2019
WHISKY LIVE
10 - 12 OCTOBER | 5 - 11 PM
Seaside Pavilion
THE WORLD'S PREMIER
WHISKY TASTING EVENT

TICKETS AVAILABLE ON
WHISKYLIVEBEIRUT.COM
& AT LIBRAIRIE ANTOINE



60 INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIST WHISKY PRODUCERS
20 MASTERCLASSES • DAILY TASTING & LIVE COMPETITIONS

GALLERIES



Pictures of the dayOct. 11, 2019

STAY CONNECTED

f









A four screen, four channel work, "Constructed Futures: Haret Hreik" is preoccupied with voices reflecting upon Haret Hreik's post-2006 reconstruction. Formally, this piece evinces the same fondness for silent fixed frame photography, sometimes accompanied by ambient sound, or else by off-frame voiceover.

As in "Mleeta," it's obvious that the artist's posture is a critical one, though here too she makes no voiceover remarks herself, preferring to let the camera do the talking. One of the first screens a visitor finds after leaving "Mleeta" begins by sampling a promotional video produced for Waad, the project that rebuilt Haret Hreik after 2006. Like "Mleeta," Schafer juxtaposes the ad's jump cuts and bluster with fixed-framed silence as she and her translator prepare to interview a Waad official, who describes the projects goals.

The other segment observers are likely to encounter after "Mleeta" assumes a fly-on-the-wall perspective. The artist's camera is trained on a hall full of people gathered before a stage. After an emcee-style introduction, one of Nasrallah's video addresses is projected upon a large screen, his remarks met with a standing ovation.

The other two segments are quieter and more successful cinematically. In one case, a man involved in the Haret Hreik reconstruction, he describes himself as "a resistant architect" and "an anti-globalist," discusses Waad in terms of a broader movement among international modernists on the periphery. Only the architect's hands enter the frame as he speaks, showing the reconstruction project's limited size.

In the most affecting of the four segments, Schafer's camera alights upon still lifelike scenes of a woman's house, rebuilt after 2006. She expresses her support for Waad and the party generally and how the culture of the resistance is built upon sacrifice. Prominent among interior decor are portraits of her eldest son, whom, it's revealed, was killed while fighting in Syria.

Schafer's study of the intersections of architecture and geopolitical propaganda confirms what was probably already known locally, that this shard of Lebanese political culture is worthy of study and artful documentation.

The incongruities the artist finds in "Mleeta" and "Haret Hreik" are informative. No doubt this would be the case were she to train her camera on one of the other architectures (and attendant propaganda narratives) in the vicinity of Hezbollah central. Take the embassy of the United States in Awkar, say, the former Ottoman casino now known as La Residence des Pins or, for that matter, the post-2000 construction works erected on the far side of Lebanon's southern border.

For some, museums and reconstructed postwar neighborhoods are less evocative of transregional architectures devoted to geopolitical propaganda than a more mundane space - the shopping mall. The mall may be less alien to Western audiences than Mleeta, but it's an

MOST READ ▾

ALL



Oct 11, 2019 | Lebanon News
Road blocked in Khaldah as car falls into hole



Oct 11, 2019 | Lebanon News
Fuel distributors say crisis over, gas stations hold on



Oct 11, 2019 | Lebanon News
Gas station owners and fuel distributors announce open-ended strike starting today



Oct 11, 2019 | Lebanon News
Bassil, Nasrallah hold lengthy meeting



Oct 11, 2019 | Lebanon News
Sabaa Party activists storm Parliament



Oct 12, 2019 | Lebanon News
Deal averts fuel crisis as govt seeks to finalize budget



CLASSIFIEDS



Full list of today's paper »

View our e-paper »

Subscribe »

STAR'S COLUMNISTS

VIEW ALL ▾



David Ignatius
Trump opens door for Daesh resurgence



Fareed Zakaria
China's grand parades might mask its weakness

architecture whose proliferation - and the patterns of consumption and sociability they promote - are likely of more global weight.

"(Re)constructed Uncertainties" is up at The Hangar, Haret Hreik, through Oct. 24.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on October 12, 2019, on page 8.

▲ Interesting

▼ Not Interesting

Recommended

[Report shows tobacco industry influence on Lebanon health policy](#)

[Forestation meets art in Beirut](#)

[Lebanese economy to shrink for first time in 20 years: World Bank](#)

[Lawsuit filed against Nidaa Al Watan](#)

[Sabaa Party activists storm Parliament](#)

[Trump warns Turkey against going too far after greenlighting Syria invasion](#)

[Advertisement](#)



BECOME A STAR FAN



The Daily Star Lebanon

Liked

368K likes

You and 250 other friends like this



Comments

Your feedback is important to us!

We invite all our readers to share with us their views and comments about this article.

Disclaimer: Comments submitted by third parties on this site are the sole responsibility of the individual(s) whose content is submitted. The Daily Star accepts no responsibility for the content of comment(s), including, without limitation, any error, omission or inaccuracy therein. Please note that your email address will NOT appear on the site.

Alert: If you are facing problems with posting comments, please note that you must verify your email with Disqus prior to posting a comment. follow this link to make sure your account meets the requirements. (<http://bit.ly/vDisqus>)

Sponsored Links

Your fingers can tell you a lot about your personality. What kind of fingers do you have?

Lestta

Just 3 Ingredients Will Help You to Clear Clogged Arteries Without Medication

Food Prevent

10 Best Foods To Lose Belly Fat

ChairFood

People from Lebanon cannot believe these flight prices

Travel Deals Shop

High speed Wi-Fi booster takes Lebanon by storm

iBooster

Play this Game for 1 Minute and see why everyone is addicted

Desert Order

CommentsCommunity

1

Login

Recommend

Tweet

Share

Sort by Newest

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your siteAdd DisqusAdd

Disqus' Privacy PolicyPrivacy PolicyPrivacy

Sponsored Links

**Your fingers can tell you a lot about your personality.
What kind of fingers do you have?**

Lestta

**Just 3 Ingredients Will Help You to Clear Clogged Arteries
Without Medication**

Food Prevent

10 Best Foods To Lose Belly Fat

ChairFood

People from Lebanon cannot believe these flight prices

Travel Deals Shop

High speed Wi-Fi booster takes Lebanon by storm

iBooster

**Play this Game for 1 Minute and see why everyone is
addicted**

Desert Order



comments powered by Disqus



Lebanon News
World
Middle East

Local
Regional
International

Editorial
Commentary
Columnist

Football
Tennis
Basketball
Other Sports
Motor Sports

Culture
Music
Movies & TV
People

Living
Health
Lubnan
Sci&Tech
Travel & Tourism
Environment