

Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige

Messages with(out) a code

8th March - 9th April 2022

The Third Line is pleased to present a solo exhibition by artists and filmmakers Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige. The exhibition proudly debuts The Third Line's newly renovated space, which is being unveiled alongside this show. *Messages with(out) a code* presents a selection of new and seminal pieces from their ongoing project *Unconformities*, which began in 2016 when the artists started collecting a series of earth core samples that revealed the subterranean worlds of cities omnipresent in their personal imaginaries: Athens, Paris, Beirut and Tripoli.

The exhibition is being presented in parallel with Hadjithomas & Joreige's three-week film retrospective at Cinema Akil that runs from 3rd - 23rd March, 2022. This retrospective also includes the premiere GCC release of *Memory Box* which had its worldwide premiere at the 71st Berlin International Film Festival.



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, *A State*, 2019, Digital Photography, Edition of 4 + 2APs

(L-R) Borehole 1, 235 x 140cm; Borehole 2, 212 x 140 cm; Borehole 3, 230 x 140cm

Unconformities is a geological term used to explain temporal ruptures, natural disasters and geological movements. Working alongside geologists and archaeologists, Hadjithomas & Joreige recuperated drilled and extracted core samples at construction sites from which interconnected works have been created that reveal natural and manmade histories from beneath the earth's surface.

The exhibition presents a *Time Capsule* and a series of framed works entitled *Trilogies* which have both been developed from sites in Monesteraki, Athens. In their *Time Capsule* works, the artists re-sculpted extracted cores from cities and set them within experimental resin, exposing these buried histories in a vertical, cylindrical structure. In *Trilogies*, the artists photographed the cores which were then given to archaeologists and historians who drew the significant findings. Hadjithomas & Joreige wrote fragments from the stories they were told as possible narratives behind the findings.

"In these cores, history appears as complex actions, a diverse mix of traces, epochs, and civilisations. It is a constant cycle of destruction and construction, catastrophe

and regeneration... Cities mix, erase, bury and recycle the same stones over and again... as a vertiginous palimpsest.” Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige.

An excerpt from the artists’ recent interview with writer and curator Shumon Basar, February 2022.

Palimpsests is also the title of a short film that takes place over several sites across Beirut, and records the various processes used to create the drilling cores, notably the manner in which the material is sorted in order to determine the suitability of the foundations. *Palimpsests* plays with scales of time and size; the massive confronts the minuscule, and the viewer passes from the macro to the microscopic.

In 2019, the artists created *A State* which is a series of three images of a drilling core sourced from a large landfill site in Tripoli, Lebanon that has accumulated waste for over 25 years. This site has radically altered the local landscape, and today forms hills that rise 45 metres above sea level. The treatment of waste is at the centre of questions regarding the inheritance of the planet and what we leave behind.

The exhibition also presents three new tapestry works by Hadjithomas & Joreige titled *Messages with(out) a code*. Derived from their personal experience on archaeological sites, the artists have witnessed the intricacies of the archaeological process where findings are set on a flat surface, giving a one-dimensional aspect to time itself. Hadjithomas & Joreige were fascinated by this process and, using photography, they documented it and became enthralled by the photographs taken which became the point of departure for these tapestry works.

“Tapestry implies a weaving, a juxtaposition of materials. It is an ancestral technique – a tradition – which can render the density of these archaeological compositions. Choosing colours from a multitude of possibilities and materials, the complexity of layers, making and unmaking, knotting and unknotting, restoring the link... Weaving is a way of restoring something that we have lost. A loss that we all feel now – perhaps even more painfully – given the recent events in Lebanon.”
Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige.

An excerpt from the artists’ recent interview with writer and curator Shumon Basar, February 2022.

About Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige

Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige were both born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1969. They collaborate as artists and filmmakers, creating thematic and formal links between photography, video, performance, installation, sculpture, and cinema. Over the last fifteen years, the duo has particularly focused on the fabrication of images and the construction of imaginaries. Using personal or political elements to record stories that were stifled in prevailing history, Hadjithomas & Joreige explore the relationship between image and narrative.

Their poignant, complex works are often intimate, established through conversations with various people they meet. Where sites have been transformed or demolished, Hadjithomas & Joreige’s work provides a social memory for those affected, giving potency to the visible remnants. Applying a documentary approach to work that rewrites history raises questions about stories kept secret, belief, transmission-bias, and the writing of histories. Highlighting

absence by documenting the tangible allows the artists to examine imaginary constructs and the contemporary fabrication of image and representations.

Their artworks are part of major private and public collections including British Museum (London), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Fond national d'art contemporain (France), MCA Chicago, Museum of Modern Art (Paris), Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE), Mamco (Geneva), Solomon R Guggenheim (New York), and Victoria & Albert Museum (London). They presented their works in solo exhibitions at Haus der Kunst (Munich), HOME (Manchester), Museum of Modern Art (Paris), IVAM (Valencia), Jeu de Paume (Paris), MIT List Visual Arts Center (Cambridge), Powerplant (Toronto), Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE), Beirut Exhibition Center (Beirut), Villa Arson (Nice) and many more. They have also participated in many group exhibitions in museums and art centres around the world, such as Ashkal Alwan (Beirut), KW Berlin, MOMA (New York), SFMOMA (San Francisco), Red Brick Art Museum (Beijing), Singapore Art Museum, Tate Modern (London), Whitechapel Gallery (London), and ZKM (Karlsruhe). They participated in many biennials such as Taipei, Venice, Istanbul, Lyon, Sharjah, Kochi, Gwangju, and the Paris Triennale.

They live and work between Beirut and Paris.

About Shumon Basar

Shumon Basar is a writer and curator. He is author of the books *The Extreme Self: Age of You* and *The Age of Earthquakes: A Guide to the Extreme Present*, both with Douglas Coupland and Hans Ulrich Obrist. Together, they co-curated the large-scale exhibition *Age of You* at MOCA Toronto and Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai. Basar is also Commissioner of the Global Art Forum in Dubai; a member of Fondazione Prada's "Thought Council;" and has editorial/advisory roles at the magazines *TANK*, *Bidoun*, *032c* and *Flash Art*.

About The Third Line

Founded in 2005, The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Jordan Nassar, Laleh Khorramian, Lamya Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Nima Nabavi, Poursan Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, yasiin bey, Youssef Nabil, and Zineb Sedira.

Media Contact

Gabriella Moore | press@thethirdline.com