

Falling is not Collapsing Falling is Extending Marwa Arsanios

b.

28 June – 29 September 2017



Marwa Arsanios, *Falling is not Collapsing, Falling is Extending*, 2016-2017. Video, 20 min 8 sec. Video still.

Beirut Art Center is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition, *Falling is Not Collapsing, Falling is Extending* by Marwa Arsanios. This exhibition which takes place at the top floor of Beirut Art Center space, features one of Arsanios' latest projects in collaboration between Beirut Art Center and Hammer Museum.

Drawing a parallel between two distinct moments in Beirut's postwar history, Arsanios' research looks at the emergence of neoliberalism in Lebanon since the beginning of the 1990s. On the one hand, Arsanios evokes the vivid memory of the 2015 garbage crisis which continues to be present today. On the other hand, she revisits the reconstruction project of Beirut's city center as the one moment that catalyzed the growth of the real-estate dream which was based on land reclamation mostly from the rubble of destroyed buildings and garbage dumps. Starting from those situations, this exhibition addresses the threatening long-term transformations that are brought about by the system of late capitalism, and the local reverberations of this system on Lebanon's environmental and sociopolitical reality.

Marwa Arsanios' installation takes the spaces of different garbage dumps around the city of Beirut to look at the accumulation of waste and its relation to strategic real estate development. It is made of different elements that come together in one spatial installation; a digital video and a series of small topographical models of the city's landfills such as Karantina, Costa Brava, Marina Dbayeh and Linor, in addition to a suite of drawings of the flora and fauna that survive the toxicity of these dumps.

The topographical models of the landfills show only the most basic contours and features of these sites, and suggest that they are simply empty spaces to be filled. The models are meant to function as "cartographies of extended lands," in the artist's words, that will become "inaccessible islands built on rubble and garbage, where real estate havens will be created." The models show that the landfills are actually part of a new form of empire building thinly veiled as redevelopment and capitalist progress. The topographies also work as a mapping device for the different dumps, land extensions and plans for land extensions, bringing together in one space the different temporalities of these development projects. Meanwhile, the series of drawings of fauna and flora takes the ecosystem of the garbage dumps in order to map out the living beings around these spaces.

The film takes as its starting point the destruction of the building where the Arsanios grew up and moves towards looking at how rubble is used as a material on garbage dumps, mixed with waste in order to build land extensions that are then turned into real estate havens. It has been one of the strategies used by real estate development in order to gain land and privatize the seashore. It attempts to look at matter and material in its intrinsic relation to real estate and economy, and to look at the real estate economy from the perspective of matter as a historicizing agent.



Marwa Arsanios, *Resilient Weeds*, 2016. A series of drawings, photo prints, black and white.



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About Marwa Arsanios

Marwa Arsanios (b. 1978, Washington DC, lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon) received her MFA from University of the Arts London in 2007, and was a researcher in the fine art department at Jan Van Eyck Academie from 2011 to 2012. She has had solo exhibitions at Witte de With, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2016), Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon (2015), and Art in General, New York (2015). Her work was also shown at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), the 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011), Home Works Forum in Beirut (2010, 2013, 2015), the New Museum, New York (2014), M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium (2013), and Ngbk, Berlin (2012). Screenings of her videos have taken place at the Berlinale, Berlin (2010, 2015), e-flux Storefront, New York (2009), and Centre Pompidou, Paris (2011). In 2012 Arsanios was awarded the special prize of the Pinchuk Future Generation Art Prize.