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# Touché!

## Gesture, Movement, Action

17|04|2019 - 22|06|2019



Roman Signer, Wasserstiefel, 1986 (Foto: Marek Rogowicz)

With the exhibition *Touché!*, Beirut Art Center touches a new base – in the actual sense of the word, as it now inhabits its new space – and expands the experience of art in new and different ways, thus enabling us to provide a temporary and open community while maintaining our diversity.

In order to bring forward experimentation in art practices, *Touché!* highlights the gestures that give form to these practices. In a large sense, gestures are constituents of the life and history of human societies, and play a role as decisive as words or speech. Without them, there neither would be a shared imagination nor collective history. Thus, whether prescriptive or discursive, normative or emancipatory, gestures seek the involvement of both senses and meaning. In a manner similar to language, they are inherent to any social contract, and to the possibility of behaving socially.

In the realm of art in particular, each gesture brings into play the sensible and the intelligible: body and thought cooperate in solidarity. Should the body intervene, it does so apart from any “image”, and in accordance with an effort that targets the specific and the singular, rather than the generic. For it is at this price that an artistic gesture is capable of invention: dedicated, intended, it invites its recipients to participate in the free interplay of reciprocity. At the same time, it proffers the matter of its reciprocity: its power of transformation engages artists and visitors alike – opening the way for gestures to come.

The artists invited here may be engaged in minute movements or larger actions, or may have produced almost invisible traces or deliberately discordant representations. You will witness recordings of gestures, activating historical dimensions through representations of a body in action – with films and photographs such as those included in the works of Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou Rahme, Francis Alÿs, George Awde, Yto Barrada, Manon de Boer, Tacita Dean, Mona Hatoum, Hassan Khan, Nesrine Khodr, Joachim Koester and Roman Signer. You will also meet traces and effects of the action of a body in space – some are installations, textiles, sculptures, drawings or paintings, such as those included in the works of Majd Abdel Hamid, Mathilde Besson, Ismail Bahri, Ali Eyal, Omar Fakhoury, Hiba Farhat, Ana Jotta, Arthur Ligeon, Pierre Leguillon, Mathilde Lequenne and Dala Nasser. Some of the pieces borrow from both approaches, especially the works of Hassan Khan, Ghida Hachicho or Rania Stephan. Alternating between the representation and the result of an act, between a represented body and a body that can be imagined in absentia, the exhibition plays with the visual and the haptic, with sound and time. You will find here an early work by American artist Richard Serra, a piece that adopts the form of a list of verbs, naming the different gestures encompassed by sculpture, associated with the eight effort verbs, listed by choreographer, teacher, and theorist Rudolf Laban in 1950. As an introduction to the exhibition, a series of short films is projected where the body is seen performing a gesture that transforms a situation, a domain or a tradition.

*Touché!* unfolds in three movements along four distinct spaces. Dark or bright, these spaces connect their audience with specific actions, events, and narratives, paving the way for many unique experiences, but also for sharing them with the people of Beirut.

Curated by Marie Muracciole and Christophe Wavelet.

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