

AGENDA

LEBANON

DANCE

'Ouled Jalleba'

Metro al-Madina, Hamra
Sept. 27, Doors open 9 p.m.
76-309-363

A witness to changes in post-Jan. 14 Tunisia, dancer and choreographer Rochdi Belgasmi is looking for an alternative choreographic language, one that emulates less-known figures of traditional society.

FILM

'Toni Erdmann'

Metropolis Cinema-Sofil
Sept. 22, 8 p.m.

www.metropoliscinema.net
Maren Ade's award winning comic drama follows Winfried Conradi, an entertainer, as he works to reconnect with his adult daughter Ines, a humorless consultant specializing in talking German businessmen into sacking their employees. Screening as part of German Film Week.

MUSIC

Tatiana Primak-Khoury

Hariri Auditorium, University of Balamand, Mar Mikhael
Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m.

The pianist, Balamand's artist-in-residence, will perform a program of works by Chopin, Haydn, Liszt and Howrani.

Marie Séférian Quartet

Brazil-Lebanon Cultural Center, Mar Mitr Street, Ashrafieh
Sept. 28, 7 p.m.
01-322-905

The jazz vocalist's quartet mainly plays Séférian's compositions, whose lyrics alternate between French lyrics and freely improvised syllables. With Javier Reyes (drums), Tim Kleinsorge (bass) and Niko Meinhold (piano) Séférian tells stories of little girls in big castles and a morning melancholy.

PHOTOGRAPHY

'Inked Minds'

Galerie de l'Institut Français du Liban, Damascus Road
Through Sept. 30
01-420-200

In this new photo series, Lama Mattar unveils portraits of men and women with exuberant tattoos, photographs that reflect the exclusive visual link between the tattooed person and their environment.

'Clashing Realities'

Galerie Tanit
Through Nov. 5
01-562-812

Asking women to wear military uniforms while posing for this portrait series, Lamia Maria Abillama attempted to show the extent to which Lebanon's society was affected by decades of conflict.

ART

'Unravelling'

Beirut Art Center, Jisr al-Wati
Through Nov. 12

REVIEW

The portrait in 13 movements

Hassan Khan's debut solo show in Beirut is a multimedia attack on self-depiction

By Jim Quilty
The Daily Star

BEIRUT: On the face of it, a portrait is just a face. Innocent observers may assume the depiction conveys a sort of truth. The face being framed, the figure's features, pose, apparel and setting apparently reflect the subject's character.

The photographic portrait can compound expectations of authenticity. It distracts you from the fact that training a lens on someone is an invitation to perform. Subject as she is to matters of light and time, the photographer is still the final arbiter in how a photograph looks. That's just for starters.

Periodically Hassan Khan has worked with portraiture. "The Portrait is an Address," now up at Beirut Art Center, gathers a selection of the Egyptian artist's portrait works within a single solo exhibition, his first in Lebanon.

Comprised of 13 individual pieces, "The Portrait" embraces several forms. Complementing the still photos are video and film works (with and without soundtrack) and a single series of cartoon caricatures.

Visitors who bear right as they enter the gallery will be lured to a color photo from 2006 called "Untitled" (Alphabet Book C). In this full portrait, a little boy stands barefoot, crouched as if the frame of the photo were a wall painted to which he had to squeeze himself. Clenched fists and facial expression suggest anger.

In this notes to the exhibition, the artist describes the work as "A self-portrait through the actions of a child actor."

At the far end of the show's second gallery is another still, hung alone on an alcove wall painted a conspicuous shade of red. It captures the oblique portrait of a woman whose once-black hair is now large-



"Untitled" (Alphabet Book C), 2006.

ly white. Her face wears a look of well-worn concern, juxtaposed nicely with the trace of floral pattern visible on her blouse or dress.

Titled "My Mother," the work is dated 2013, which may explain her expression. Khan writes that he took the photos with a mobile phone "after six years of thinking about it and hesitating."

Back in the first gallery a television monitor houses the exhibition's sole work of self-portraiture. Titled "sometime/somewhere else," this 2001 video presents a brief split screen video of the artist as a young man. In the top half of the screen, a 15-year-old Khan is interviewed by a Swedish film crew for a television series on young adults. Asked what he would do if he were running things, he replies with serious-minded state-socialist policy positions like import-substitution and heavy industry.

Immediately below, a 17-year-old Khan is demonstrating his prowess on electric guitar. Scrolling between the two scenes is a list of words the artist used some years later to characterize

his two youthful performances.

Much of the work in "The Portrait" is comprised of still or moving images but Khan's writing is a major part of the show. It takes the form of standalone pieces – spoken-word audio works and stencils – as well as lines scripted for audiovisual monologue and captions accompanying still and moving images.

The single-channel black-and-white video "Rant," 2008, finds a short-haired young woman enclosed within a white room, slouching, twitchy, at one end of a table. The setting is cinematic, reminiscent of a police interrogation scenario, though she has the only speaking part and it's unclear whether the camera lens is meant to stand in for an interrogator's impassive eye or not.

"I'm fed up," she says.

"I can't go on."

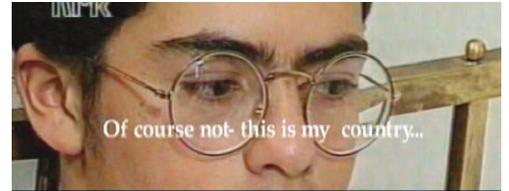
In jump-cuts, the camera examines her hands, her ears, her teeth gnawing her nails.

"All they want to do is become famous," she says intensely, toying with a cigarette lighter. "They mix everything up without thinking... I think about them on a daily basis."

As its title suggests, "Rant" seems less interested in a naturalistic depiction of a young adult than in capturing a species of emotional intensity and obsessiveness that can characterize young adults.

Other works set aside cinematic language and photographic convention and aspire to literary depiction. Two of these pieces reside in the show's first gallery.

The 2013 audio work "Three Solos" was devised for Paris' Nuit Blanche, each of the three pieces with different musical accompaniment. As standalone works – which can be read from stencil or overheard – these pieces offer snippets of characterization that wouldn't be out of place in a short story or novel.



"sometime/somewhere else," 2001.



"Technicolor Mubarak," 2001.

Adjacent "Three Solos" is the 2010 work "Mahmoud El Ansari" – a wall text stenciled in highly formal, historic-looking (Arabic) font.

Though the figure of Ansari is clearly a contemporary figure, the font style colludes with the style of writing to suggest that the species of isolation contempt – and self-contempt – he expresses has deep historical resonance.

The works in "The Portrait" range from individual profiles – fictive and non-fictive, Egyptians and not – and expressions of neuroses that characterize the contemporary human condition, afterimages of which variously play upon all our faces.

Matters of form are as varied as the figures depicted. The video works run the gamut from the socio-cultural condensation of "Rant" to a very different sort of precis in his 2010 black-and-white video "GBRL."

In his notes to the show, Khan describes this work as the fruit of a 10-day-long effort to produce a friend's "interior map of her idea of self," which they then shot at her flat one afternoon. The camera follows a woman as she makes coffee. She utters a definitive "Yes." She puts a CD in her ghetto blaster. "I will do it," she says. Then she raises the

blinds. She goes to the bathroom and moisturizes. She retrieves a letter from her bag. Eventually she sits at her table as if to work.

It is, in short, a portrait of a woman procrastinating, a depiction that would reside comfortably in a conventional short film.

More experimental pieces deliberately unsettle the premises of portraiture. In "G.R.A.H.A.M.," 2008, the subject is fixed in the lens of a film camera for several minutes. The projection of the portrait is slowed down so that viewing the portrait takes longer than recording it.

In "Studies for Structural Film no. 2," 2013, a series of seated subjects remain stationary while the camera operator encircles them – the way Hitchcock's camera operator might circle a pair of lovers – defying each to keep the lens in their gaze.

"The Portrait is an Address" is a thoughtful, thought-provoking, at times amusing exhibition, one that's particularly in tune with this self-absorbed era. Khan invites onlookers to entertain questions of how we are seen, and see.

"The Portrait is an Address" is up at BAC through Nov. 13. For more, see www.beirutartcenter.org/exhibitions.



From "Rant," 2008.

La La Land gets TIFF prize ... and an Oscar boost

By Michel Comte
Agence France Presse

TORONTO: The bewitching musical "La La Land" starring Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone won the coveted audience prize of the Toronto International Film Festival Sunday, giving it a leg-up on the competition as the Oscars race takes shape.

The joyful, quirky film by writer-



nearly 1,600 kilometers from home. Adapted from Saroo Brierley's autobiography, "A Long Way Home," the film stars Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman and Rooney Mara.

The jury of the International Federation of Film Critics, known by its French abbreviation FIPRESCI, recognized two TIFF features.

In the Discovery program, dedicated to first-time filmmakers, FIPRESCI feted Mbithi Masya's