

EXHIBITION:**Charbel-joseph H. Boutros****Whatever happened to my eyes, happened to your beauty.****Opening: Aug. 28, 2015, 6pm****Press preview: Friday, Aug. 28, 2015, 4pm****Aug. 29 – Sep. 26, 2015**

The first solo exhibition of Lebanese artist Charbel-joseph H. Boutros in Switzerland is a constellation of performative apparatus and time-based works. Hints and layers of autobiographic and geographical conditions, as well as universal structures are echoed in perceptions such as the smell of heat, the glare of the sun in Beirut, São Paulo, Zurich, amongst other places, and the diffused breath of two individuals. Steering away from conventional notions of sculpture or classical performance, the works come into being through a process of “real-time actions.”

Boutros’s exhibition comprises a number of ongoing works, and three newly created works. One of the specially produced works for Counter Space is the installation *Geography and disappearance*. Assorted heaters are scattered throughout the space. Operating at full heat, the room temperature created in the space is on par with the temperature of Lebanon. The temperature is synchronized day by day. Nearby, hanging on a wall, is *Days under their own sun* wherein different daily paper calendars have been subjected to sunlight in different locations; the sun of Faraya (Lebanon), Paris, São Paulo, Zurich, and Maastricht. Each calendar slip was exposed to the day’s sun, from sunrise to sunset. A minimal Carrara marble cube lies on the ground. The work, *Marble, change and eternity*, is equal in weight to that of Boutros in flesh and blood, 68 kg, underlining at the same time, the absence and omnipresence, of the artist during the exhibition period. What will be the status of this work if the artist loses or gains weight?

Time-scopes and relations echo, a moment having taken place in the past with traces of light on daily calendars; another related to the present, but also ongoing, with the heat of the radiators, activating the physical experience of the artist’s native country. Charbel’s works, contained in a formulaic and discreet way, are indicative of how layers and reactions change in time: “I link to the past, but I try to jump into the unknown. I used to see these calendars at home as a child. I am quite interested in how the historical language of Lebanon, Aramaic, has disappeared from this land. The days of Lebanese calendars exposed to the sun, with the text and paper fading, in some sense parallels the fading of this language, or somehow the fading of old ethnicities, like Christianity in the Middle East.”

Things and actions take on an oblique course related to the daily life and to the intimate experiences of the artist. For the work *Mon amour*, the artist makes purchases at a local supermarket. Calculated acquisitions are listed on a receipt. The first word of every item, when read vertically, forms the phrase “*Mon amour*,” French for “my love.” The pragmatics of shopping becomes skewed. In like manner, *Souffles d’artistes* is an allusion and a twist to the work of avant-garde artist P. Manzoni (1933 – 1963) with the same title, but in its plural form. A balloon has been placed on the ground, and blown up with the breath of Boutros and his girlfriend, artist Stephanie Saade – becoming impossible to divide.

The multi-lateral approaches in Boutros’s work point to a poetic fragility, wherein glimpses or footnotes are in danger of becoming forgotten: How will perceptions change in time? How will physical forms endure sunlight? How will an artist’s work be actualized in the future?

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Charbel-joseph H. Boutros

Charbel-joseph H. Boutros was born in Mount Lebanon in 1981 and lives and works between Beirut and Paris. He was a resident at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht and at the Pavillon Neuflyze OBC, Palais de Tokyo, Paris.

Boutros work has been shown in international venues, such as: *Untitled*, 12th International Istanbul Biennial, Turkey / *Forgotten Lands*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris / 3rd Bahia Biennial / *Exposure 2010*, Beirut Art Center, Lebanon / MAM Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia, Salvador, Brazil / *more Konzeption Conception now*, Museum Morsbroich, Germany / *Adam, Eve & the Devil*, Marres, Netherlands / Fons Welters Gallery, Amsterdam / Grey Noise Gallery, Dubai / Jacqueline Martins Gallery, São Paulo / LISTE 19, Basel.

Upcoming exhibitions include: CCA Warsaw, Poland / Palais de Tokyo, Paris / Agha Khan Museum, Toronto

Counter Space

Counter Space is an independent exhibition and project space in Zürich, which aims to present the use of temporary and process-like methods in artistic work. With fervor, we seek to show chosen glimpses and fragments of work, through a cross-generational approach.

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