

For Immediate Release



AUB exhibit showcases our experience with Time

Beirut, Lebanon- 08/04/2015 - We live in the age of being busy, where we have to race against time to go through our work emails; then rush out of the office to beat the traffic; then zip through dinner to start our evening activities, whether with our families or alone. We are overscheduled and underslept. We are always in a rush, and rarely take time to ponder.

A new exhibition, “This is Time. This is the Record of Time,” organized by the AUB Art Galleries in collaboration with Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, invites visitors to stop and reflect on their own relationships with time and how they record it and interact with it.

Showcasing nine commissioned works of art by an equal number of participating artists, the exhibition, which opened on March 26, 2015, will run until July 25. The AUB Byblos Bank Art Gallery, where it is held on campus, will open its doors to visitors Tuesdays to Saturdays 12pm to 6pm.

The participating artists investigate the extent to which the recording mechanisms and material recordings of our lived times shape our notions of temporality- both world historical and that of the art world.

The exhibition and its newly commissioned works premiered at Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam in September 2014.

“The works in the exhibitions can be viewed as attempts to position the mechanisms of recording time not as external to time itself, or our notions of temporality, but rather as those that construct our conceptions of time today,” said Angela Harutyunyan, co-curator of the exhibit.

The exhibit takes its cue from Laurie Anderson’s ominous 1982 song, “From the Air,” where she describes the duration between becoming conscious that the plane will crash and its actual impact itself; the moment when time and space collapse; when the machine, the body, and your geographical location at a given moment in the world are lost. This is the time when an abyss opens up of accelerated thought, where past, present and future collide in a reality that is turned topsy-turvy. More than anything else, it represents the ultimate loss of control, over time or anything else for that matter.

The idea of feeling lost in mid-air and nose-diving towards imminent disaster resonates in our era, characterized as it is by the perpetual reproduction of crisis, be that economical, political, social, ecological or personal. While we have the possibility and means to share our

daily events through the internet and social media to a degree that was not possible before, we seem to have less power over the course that our world is taking.

Although the incessant news feeds, social media and other devices keep people constantly exposed to the various events in the making, individuals seem to understand less of the current times as they become overloaded with information. Despite events playing out in real-time, readily available at one's fingertips, there is a huge question mark as to how all that helps shed light on the ongoing current conditions.

Angela Harutyunyan and Nat Muller, curators of the exhibition, suggested that we are in dire need of reconsidering how we experience, record and historicize our time.

"In the age of accelerated experiences and highly mediated means of relating to the world, the works call for reflection, a much needed one if we were to capture the qualitative features of our epoch," said Haroutyunyan.

"Rather than triggering feelings, I believe that the works challenge our conceptual understandings of temporality, and by extent, open up new possibilities to re-conceive our times in their complexity," she added.

The artists and their works consisted of the following: Kristina Benjocki, 'Study of Focus' addressing the issue of groundlessness in present times by looking into tapestry traditions and history textbooks of the former Yugoslavia; Sebastian Diaz Morales, 'Pasajes' video series giving shape to what the artist calls "an optional reality" in which characters operate as guides through various natural and urban landscapes; Peter Fengler, 'PAPERWORKS I-VII' and 'REVERSE 1-20' plays with the notion of closely resembling editions and alludes to their sculptural potential; Daniele Genadry's recent studio work reconsiders perception and its relation to experience through various forms of image-making; Diana Hakobyan, 'The Flight is Normal' comprising of dozens of photocopied sheets of paper of the same size that share a common background: a found photograph of a close up to a child's face next to an airplane window; Walid Sadek, 'What Job's Wife Said' researches into what he calls a "protracted civil war" in Lebanon, a civil war that is being sustained by the palliative projection of hope by the various parties involved; Rayyane Tabet, 'Waiting for a Manifestation: One Week' is a drawing made on site, on the walls of the SMBA. It consists of tally marks drawn in pencil to cover as much of the surface as possible within a one-week period; Esmé Valk collaborates with contemporary dancer Fabián Barba and looks at how Ausdruckstanz, an early twentieth-century German expressionist dance form, has evolved over time; Cynthia Zaven, 'PERPETUUM MOBILE', a piano composition for a 12-channel sound installation, where 12 loudspeakers are positioned in a circle, each 1 meter apart with the composition attempting to emulate the process by which we perceive the passing of time, with the sound of one note moving clockwise from one speaker to the next, every second.

A host of public events took place alongside the main exhibit: Sebastian Diaz Morales, Artist's Talk on March 25, 2015 at The Mansion, Zoqaq el-Blat; Peter Fengler, Performance on March 26, 2015 at AUB Building 37; and Thinking About Time Conference on March 27 & 28 at AUB, College Hall, Auditorium B, where the keynote speaker, Ray Brassier, under the title 'Absolute History' will consider time, temporality, and history via a critical discussion of Fredric Jameson's remarkable essay "The Valences of History."

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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