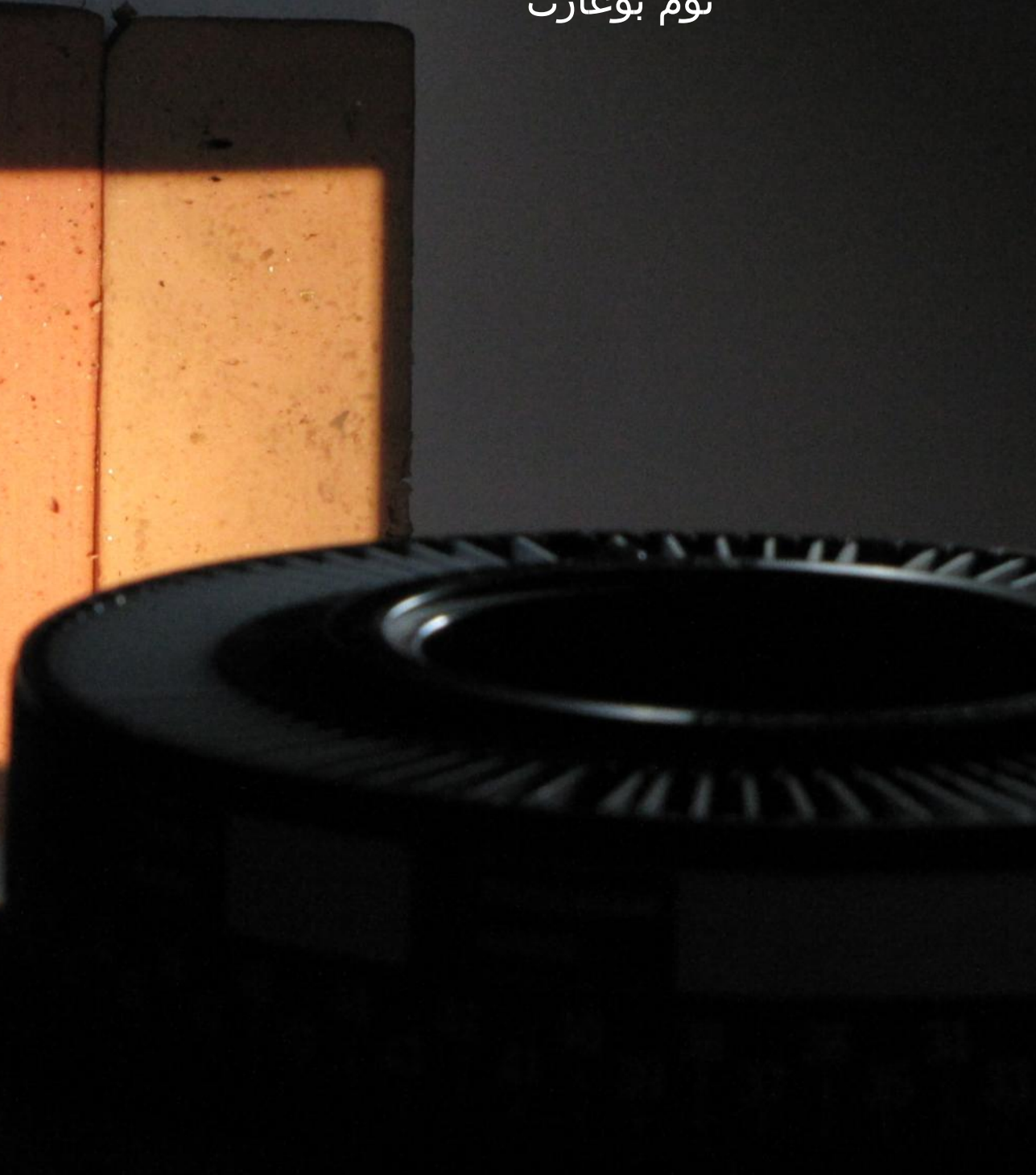


وفعلت هذه الأقدام

توم بوغارت



AND DID THOSE FEET

Tom Bogaert - June 28 to August 31, 2012



حوش الفن الفلسطيني
Palestinian Art Court - al Hoash

al Hoash Gallery
7 Zahra street
Jerusalem
Tel: 02 6273501

With the support of
the Flemish authorities



I ended up in the Orient by accident and I realize that the issue of Saidian Orientalism - prejudiced outsider interpretations of the East as surveyed by Edward W. Said - that pervades my work is problematic.

Constant self-examination and -criticism have indeed confirmed that there is very little moral higher ground for me to be left standing on. At the same time I seek to be more than a mere 'Accidental Orientalist.' Edward W. said: "there is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate..."

Tom Bogaert
Jerusalem, June 2012

This Week in Palestine – issue 120, June 2012: The Belgian conceptual artist Tom Bogaert will be having his first solo exhibition in Palestine, “And Did Those Feet,” from June 28 to August 31, 2012, at al Hoash Gallery in Jerusalem. Bogaert has been working in the region for the past three years on his project, “Impression, proche orient” (IPO), an art project referencing issues relevant to contemporary Near East society, including the changes, politics, artistic identity, and the new Arabs. The exhibition at al Hoash Gallery networks the region as a whole and will include works from IPO in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. Bogaert’s perspective is insightful and accessible; the artwork is politically provocative and formally inventive.

Drawing on his experience as a European living and working in the East, it is the artist’s intention to interpret understandings of the region – or lack thereof – from the inside out. As he is an outsider with the privilege of being given access to the inside, Bogaert’s aim is to use irony, gesture, and narratives from the region by means of artistic production. The exhibition at al Hoash will combine the reconstruction of installations and the documentation of the works and experiments of the past three years.

The symbolic references of the individual IPO chapters are quite simple, but through twisted starting points such as cucumbers and cars in Jordan, simple images of representation become building blocks for deeper analysis. In Syria it was the story about eye doctor Bashar al-Assad: like a tragic story from *One Thousand and One Nights*. In Palestine, Bogaert worked with Ariel washing powder bought in the settlement of Ariel, and most recently with Nablus ants. In Lebanon, the artist fixed broken glass curb markers and presented maps of Beirut salvaged from car glass repair shops. “Empire state-building” deals with the failed attempts at state-building by imperialistic outsiders in Iraq.

Bogaert will also present a new site-specific work for Jerusalem based on an 1808 poem by William Blake, *And did those feet in ancient time*. Today the poem is best known as the anthem “Jerusalem,” with music written by Hubert Parry in 1916.

The exhibition reflects the multi-faceted ingenuity, the subtle provocation, and the witty playfulness characteristic of Bogaert’s work.

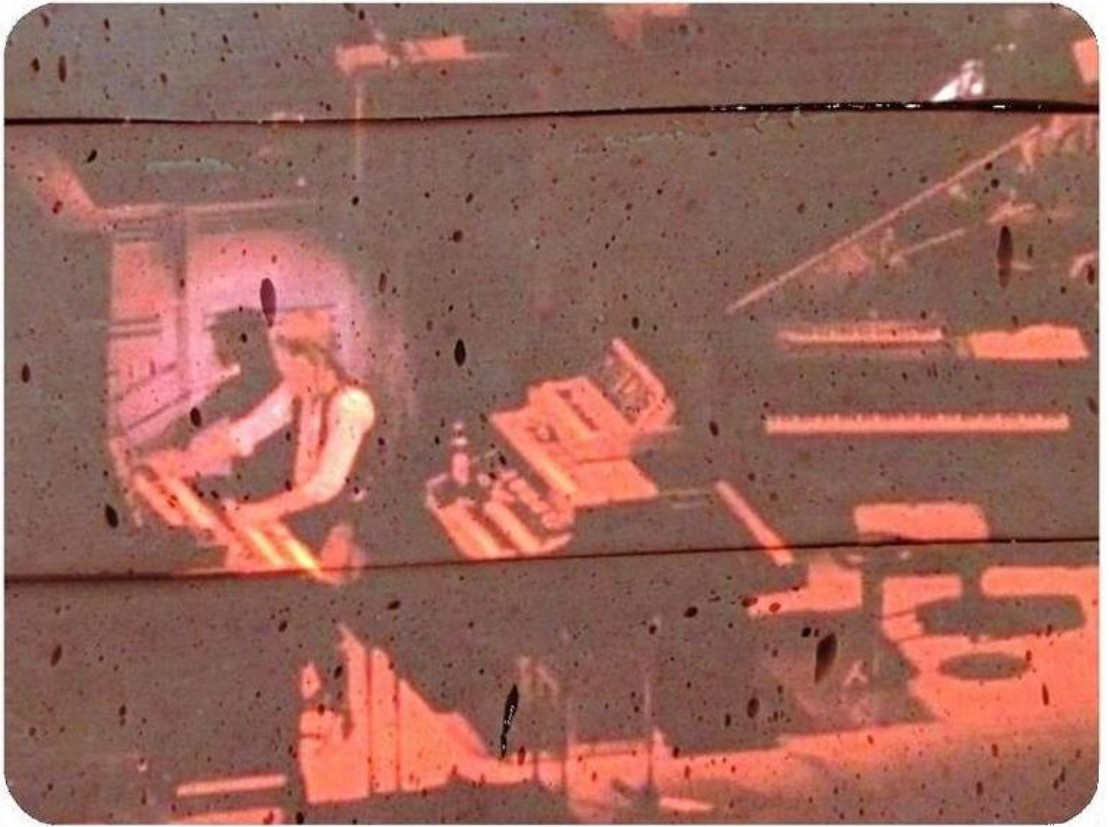
Opening reception: Thursday June 28 at 7:00 p.m.
Press preview with the artist: 4:00 p.m.

June 28 to August 31, 2012
Monday to Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

www.alhoashgallery.org
www.tombogaert.org

Text and images courtesy al Hoash Gallery

Companion to the Exhibition

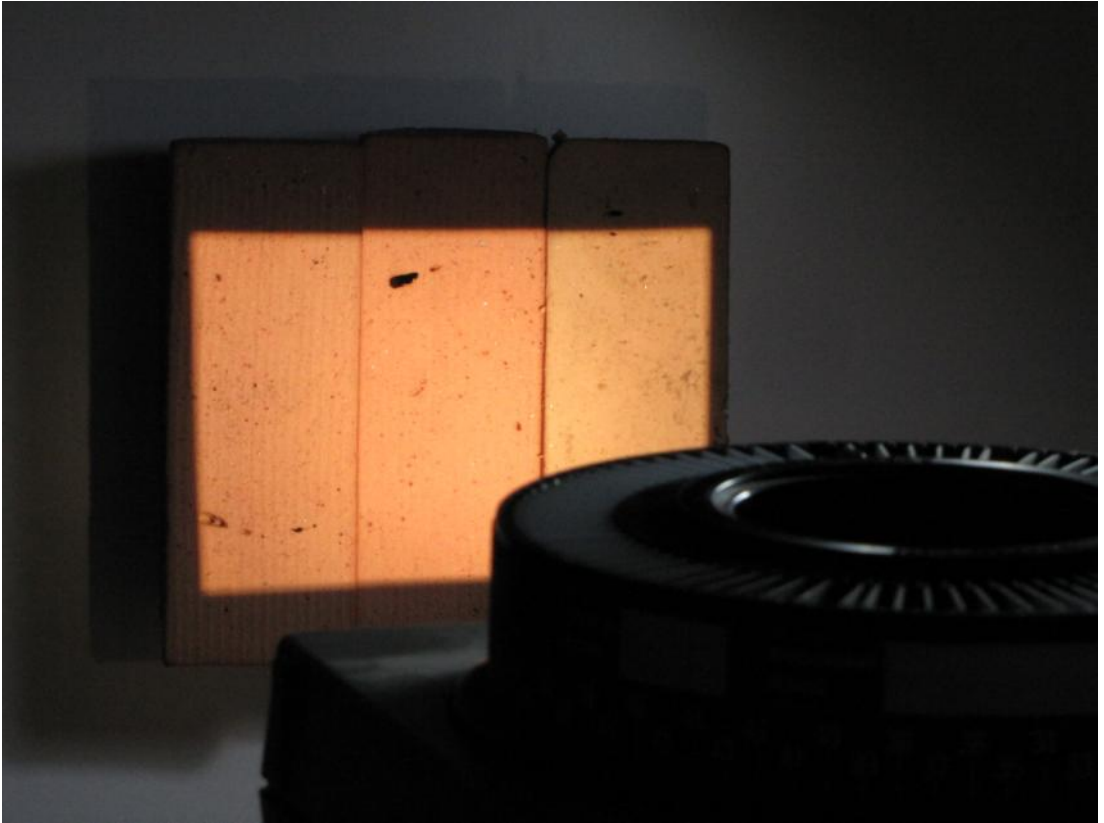


Emerson Lake & Palmer performing 'Jerusalem' in 1974, 35mm slide projection on processed meat 'Siniora Al Quds'

And Did Those Feet. The title of the exhibition comes from William Blake's 1808 poem 'And did those feet in ancient time.' The poem was inspired by the apocryphal story that a young Jesus, accompanied by his uncle Joseph of Arimathea, travelled to the area that is now England and visited the town of Glastonbury during Jesus' lost years. The legend is linked to an idea in the 'Book of Revelation' describing a 'Second Coming,' wherein Jesus establishes a New Jerusalem -- a metaphor for heaven, a place of universal love and peace.

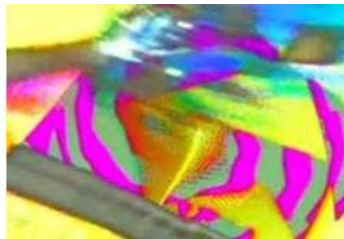
Today the poem is best known as the anthem 'Jerusalem,' with music written by Hubert Parry in 1916. The popularity of Parry's setting has resulted in many hundreds of recordings being made of both traditional choral performances and new interpretations by popular music artists. In 1973, a version appears on Emerson, Lake & Palmer's album 'Brain Salad Surgery' with a live rendition included on their 'Welcome Back My Friends to the Show That Never Ends... Ladies and Gentlemen' album.

In a new site-specific installation, Tom Bogaert projects 35mm slides of Emerson, Lake & Palmer on slices of chicken luncheon 'Siniora Al Quds' accompanied by their 1974 live version of 'Jerusalem' on vinyl.



And Did Those Feet - installation view, al Hoash gallery, Jerusalem 2012

Emerson, Lake & Palmer, also known as ELP is a British band known for its role in the development of art rock during the 1970s. The members were Keith Emerson, Greg Lake and Carl Palmer.



screenshots from DVD *Pictures at an Exhibition* - ELP 1971

Before the group made its debut in 1970, its members were veterans of the British art rock scene: keyboardist Emerson had formerly led 'the Nice,' and Lake had been bassist and lead singer for 'King Crimson.' ELP made synthesizer keyboards rather than guitars the centrepiece of its sound and developed an eclectic and innovative style blending classical music, jazz, blues, electronic music (then still a novelty), and Tin Pan Alley.

Their numerous albums featured lengthy, elaborate original compositions such as “Tarkus” and “Karn Evil Number 9”; imaginative covers of serious classical pieces, most notably Mussorgsky’s “Pictures at an Exhibition,” and occasional hymns, all played with great technical virtuosity.

ELP disbanded in 1979 but reunited in the early 1990s. However, as was the case with many re-formed 1970s rock groups, the trio's new recordings neither recaptured the passion of their earlier work nor struck out in new musical directions.

Encyclopædia Britannica Online



Siniora is a name generations in Palestine grew up with. In the 1970's the brand Siniora (or Siniora *Al Quds*, from Jerusalem) stood for just one product: the rose colored round slices of processed meat and it was the only form of cold cut most people knew.

The first Siniora meat-processing factory was established in 1920 in Jerusalem. In 1948, the factory was relocated to a new site within the walls of the old city. Operations continued there until December 1997, when production was relocated to a plant on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

In 2002, the Siniora Food Company moved to a new facility in the 'Sahab Industrial City' in neighboring Jordan.

source: website Siniora Food Industries



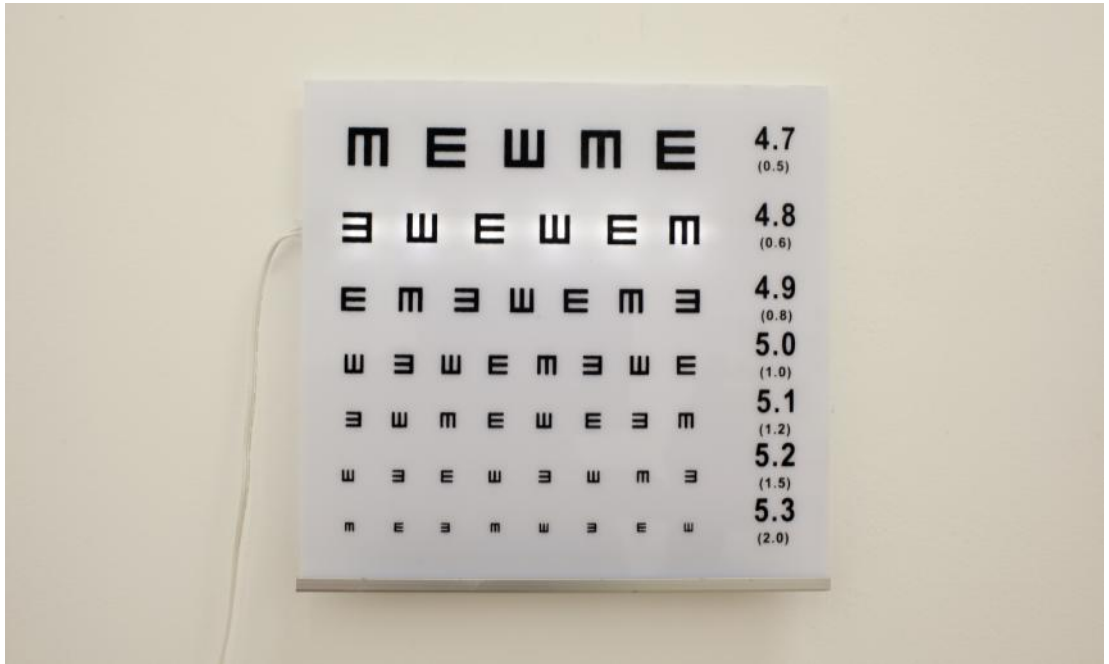
Jordan Cucumber, 2010 - installation view, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Denmark 2012

The proposal by which Palestinians simply have to come to Jordan for all their problems to be solved is called the ‘Jordan option.’ It’s a perennial idea floated by different political actors in the region in various forms: the term also refers to a possible Jordanian security role in the West Bank or a future form of unity between a Palestinian state and the Kingdom of Jordan.

In discussing this Jordan Option, Khalid Mishal (the leader of Hamas) and other Arab leaders, jokingly call it the ‘Jordan cucumber’ because the Arabic word ‘khiyar’ translates as both ‘option’ and ‘cucumber.’

This option / cucumber wordplay is the starting point for the 'Jordan cucumber' project. It consists of painted and rotting cucumbers, a translucent tablecloth greenhouse, seedlings and video.

The installation documents Jordan cucumbers as they succumb to the process of decay, the rotting cucumbers itself reflecting the status of the 'Jordan option' as a political possibility.



Syria, 2010|2011 - installation view, al Hoash gallery, Jerusalem 2012

The eye doctor's tumbling E eye chart is the alpha and omega of the Syrian 'Impression, proche orient' (IPO) chapter. Syrian president Bashar al-Assad is a British-trained ophthalmologist -- does Dr. Bashar still dream about tumbling Eye Doctor E charts and the course for Syria they might chart: left, right, up or down?

Tumbling Es as rudderless symbols for Syria's evolving foreign and domestic policies overflowing with apparent contradictions: its self-proclaimed goal is peace with Israel, yet it has allied itself with partners vowed to Israel's destruction. It takes pride in being a bastion of secularism even as it makes common cause with Islamist movements; it simultaneously has backed Iraqi Sunni insurgents and a Lebanese Shiite armed group.

The first Syrian pieces including video, sculpture and source material were presented in Aleppo, Syria in August 2010. The source material consists - among other things - of tumbling E eye charts, 3D decoder glasses in the colors of the Flag of the Arab Revolt, grand mausoleums and Damascus' Soviet-style boulevards of broken dreams.



Water Tanks, 2010 - installation view, Makan Art Space, Amman, Jordan 2011

The base for the project in Syria is president Bashar al-Assad's story that he wasn't supposed to rule Syria. "I never cared about this position," he told the American Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in 2007. "I'd be comfortable not being here."

His older brother was the heir apparent, but was killed in a car crash. When their father, president Hafez al-Assad, died in 2000, the mantle fell to Bashar al-Assad. Suddenly, an unassuming man, who had been studying to become an ophthalmologist in London, was president of Syria.





Minecraft Mausoleum, 2010|2011 - screenshot from 04:14 short film

Syrian president Bashar al-Assad is known to be a computer geek. He used to be chairman of the 'Syrian Computer Society' and opened up his country to the internet in 2001. In the face of the Arab Spring's general enthusiasm for online tools, *Minecraft Mausoleum* utilizes Minecraft - an online building game - as context and medium to present a model of a Mausoleum for president Bashar.

President Bashar's father Hafez and brother Basil are buried in a vast echoing mausoleum in the city of Qardaha. This M ("E down") shaped mausoleum might be how Assad's Mausoleum will look like.



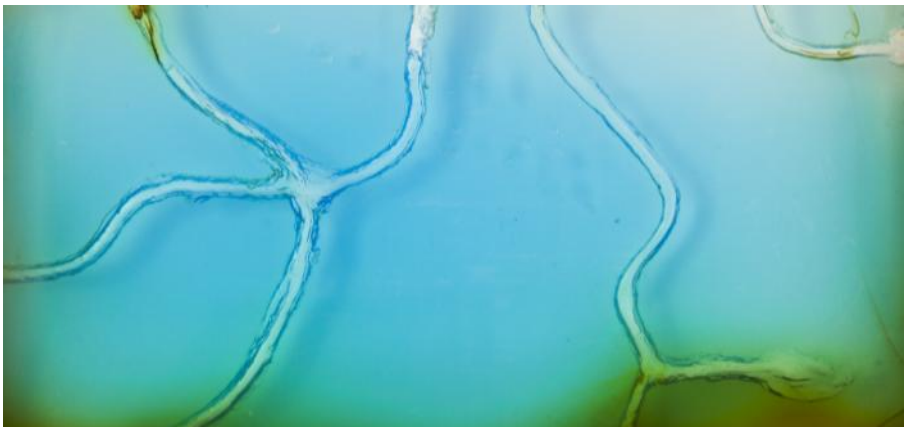


Ant Farm Nablus, 2011 - ant farm gel experiments presented on light box, Nablus

***Ant Farm Nablus* addresses the problems** inherent in academicizing, aestheticizing and glorifying contemporary warfare. For this, Tom Bogaert examines the theme of 'inverse geometry' a so-called 'high concept spatial technique' used by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in their 2002 offensive against the Palestinian resistance in Nablus and described by Eyal Weizman in his 'Walking Through Walls':

"...During the battle soldiers moved within the city across hundreds of meters of 'overground tunnels' [...] the military borrowed metaphors from the world of aggregate animal formation as 'swarming' and 'infestation' [...] the IDF's strategy of 'walking through walls' involves a conception of the city as not just the site, but the very medium of warfare, a flexible, almost liquid medium that is forever contingent and in flux..."

The starting point for *Ant Farm Nablus* is a map of the old city of Nablus made of translucent 'agar-agar' - a vegetarian gelatin substitute. The map functions as an ant farm as the gel serves as both habitat and nutrition for the ants. This allows the viewer to watch the ants turn the gel map into a colony of tunnels. *Ant Farm Nablus* at this stage depicts what it means to be able to bend space to your own particular navigational, political and military needs.



Ant Farm Nablus, 2011 - site specific intervention in the old city of Nablus



Walking Through Walls Revisited, 2011 - site-specific intervention, old city of Nablus

Bogaert mapped and photographed remnants of the IDF's 2002 strategy of 'walking through walls' in Nablus. He then used a living room with a hole-in-the-floor to bring movement, chaos, destruction and tragedy - war at its worst - back into the equation in an eclectic range of mediums, including burned sage, non-Newtonian fluid, disco lights and sound.

Some of the 'inverse geometry' traces the artist managed to find in Nablus now look new again, as if giant alien bugs have just blasted their way through the walls by using plasma guns - the liquefied concrete still steaming, humming.



al-Aswad house , Al-Yassmineh - Nablus



Kompressor, 2010 - installation view, al Hoash gallery, Jerusalem 2012

***Kompressor* features waxed down strips of car body metal** in the colors of the flag of the Arab Revolt, with sections of the Mercedes-Benz ‘kompressor’ logo affixed to each. This piece explores intersections between enlightened absolutism and badges used by Mercedes-Benz for their supercharged engines.

Tom Bogaert coined the neologism ‘kompressor’ in the context of his research on forms of government in the Arab world. Until recently the term ‘kompressor’ referred mainly to Mercedes Benz’s turbocharged engines and the hugely popular – albeit overused - badges that identify them. The new meaning he gave ‘kompressor’ is the product of the following formula: compassionate + oppressor = kompressor. It reflects the ‘Everything for the people, nothing by the people’ spirit of self-declared enlightened absolutism and it can be applied to the majority of rulers in the region.

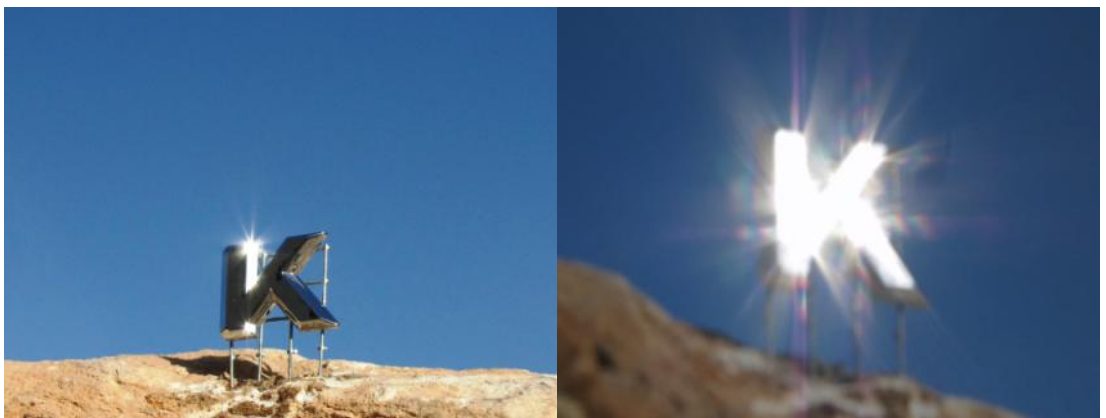
In effect, it seems that compassionate Presidents, Sheiks, Kings and Chairmen rule with the intent of improving the lives and happiness of their subjects primarily in order to strengthen their own authority.

Kompressors also share their subjects’ obsession with German cars, and Mercedes in particular. A cult of personality often arises and kompressors tend to use mass media and propaganda to create an idealized and heroic public image. Compassionate oppressors see themselves as heroes of the nation, without whom, the transformation to a better future can’t occur.



K is for Kompressor, 2011 - installation view, al Hoash gallery, Jerusalem, 2012

K is for Kompressor (KfK) is a filmed Hollywood-style sign featuring the letter 'k' of the Mercedes-Benz 'kompressor' logo. In this piece Tom Bogaert further explores intersections between enlightened absolutism and badges used by Mercedes-Benz for their supercharged engines.



still images from KfK video, 2011



Ariel 2, 2010 – installation view, Birzeit, Palestine

In September 2010, the artist participated in the Triangle Arts Trust | Al-Mahatta Gallery Workshop in the West Bank university town of Birzeit, Palestine.

On the occasion of an official visit to the settlement of Ariel - 50 km north of Birzeit and with 20,000 inhabitants one of the largest Israeli settlements in Palestine – Bogaert bought 7 boxes of Ariel washing powder in the local supermarket and then used Ariel and other boxes combined with everyday detritus to construct a makeshift sculptural settlement in uptown Birzeit. The construction was presented on a bed of washing powder.

Ariel 2 addresses the theme of hubris. In its modern usage, hubris denotes overconfident pride and arrogance; it is often associated with a lack of humility, not always with the lack of knowledge.



Pavement Popsicles, 2011 - documentation of performance, Beirut, Lebanon

The video - made in collaboration with Siska - shows Tom fixing broken glass curb markers by placing exact copies of the markers made out of ice in the gaps created by the missing lenses. The ice versions of the lenses are modeled after original lenses obtained from the Municipality of Beirut after a 5 days quest deep inside the hot and humid core of the city's management system. The average melting time of the ice lenses stands at 20 minutes depending on the time of day and whether they are exposed to direct sunlight or not.

Pavement Popsicles is presented as a one-channel video installation featuring a painted papier-mâché model of a segment of a Beirut roundabout - glass curb markers included.



Cracked Windshields, 2011 - installation view, al Hoash gallery, Jerusalem 2012

When covering events such as civil wars, journalists tape 'Press' and 'TV' signs on the windshield of their cars. The artwork 'cracked windshields' goal was to somehow provoke and find protection under a taped 'ART' signage. Tape as an amulet, words like magic water protecting Mai-Mai warriors from bullets.

In Lebanon, Tom Bogaert became dissatisfied with the aesthetic and conceptual starting point and outcome of the project. He subsequently turned to cracked windshields salvaged from car glass repair shops and turned them into maps of Beirut.



Jim Belushi and James Woods in Oliver Stone's "Salvador," 1986



Piso Mojada para Gaza, ongoing performance - installation view, Gaza city 2011

The Piso Mojado series is a succession of performances in which Tom Bogaert mounts a yellow multi-lingual safety cone onto a mooring buoy. The buoy travels to varying bodies of water. As of yet, Bogaert installed Pisos Mojados in Brooklyn, Staten Island, the Dead Sea, Belgium, Miami and Gaza City.

The Piso Mojado piece functions as an “open” work with no specific meaning imposed. This allows the interpretation of the work to change with it’s content, which is fluid and changes with time, context and audience. For example, in Miami the buoy was interpreted as a comment on the ‘Wet Feet, Dry Feet Policy’: a Cuban citizen, who is caught on the waters between Cuba and the United States (i.e. ‘wet floor’), would summarily be sent home or to a third country. One who makes it to shore (‘dry floor’) gets a chance to remain in the US.



Empire state-building, 2012

British troops first invaded what was to become Iraq in November 1914. At the League of Nations San Remo conference in April 1920 the British Empire committed itself to state-building in Iraq. It was state-building by imperialistic outsiders ('Empire state-building'): an external intervention into a foreign territory that attempted to legitimate itself in terms of betterment of the population it claimed to be helping. This exogenous state-building was 'top down': driven by dynamics, personnel and ideologies that had their origins completely outside the society they were operating in.

By the time of its independence in 1932, Iraq could neither defend itself against its neighboring states, nor impose order unassisted across its territory. One year before Iraq's independence, the Empire State Building in New York City was officially opened and to this day, the building remains a construction feat that invokes awe and wonder.



Empire state-building - installation view, al Hoash Gallery, Jerusalem, 2012

The US invasion of Iraq - shock and awe - in March 2003 marked the second time in Iraq's 85 years history that imperialistic 'top down' intervention, justified in the name of state-building, has failed to deliver on the promise of creating stable, sustainable and democratic institutions.

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Empire state-building is work in progress; it is an artist project in the form of an exhibition/installation in variable dimensions depending on the size and budget possibilities. X months after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, 'Empire state-building' brings together artistic, architectural and media production responding to the status of upside-downness in various contexts. This project addresses the use of top-down strategies in visual arts, media, architecture, politics, the military and curatorship.



Dick Cheney



Gloria

'Empire state-building' features special upside-down cases including Anthony Papa's 'Country in Distress: The Upside Down Flag', Time Magazine's 1986 and Newsweek's 2009 upside-down covers, the 'most-wanted Iraqi playing cards set' and other projects that cull inspiration from relevant and irrelevant upside-downness.





Empire state-building - installation view, al Hoash Gallery, Jerusalem, 2012

Embracing and transcending budget, insurance and copyright issues, Bogaert makes small scale / low production value artworks – through the technique of appropriation - using famous upside-down art as a basis. The check list includes Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla (*Gloria*), *Freaking News* (Dick Cheney), Dennis Oppenheim (*Device to Root Out Evil*), Daniel Firman (*Würsa à 18 000 Km de la Terre*), ThiagoOliveira1984 (*Fat Iraqi Gangsta Boy* - Godfather theme) and others.

The selection of elements for this project is based on their level of upside-downness and/or associations with Iraq's recent history.

Tom Bogaert

Before dedicating his life to art, Belgian artist Tom Bogaert documented genocide and human rights abuses in Africa, Europe and Asia. He worked as a lawyer for Amnesty International and the UN refugee agency. The artist does not see his artwork as an extension of his refugee work, although it does directly confront the intersection of human rights, entertainment and propaganda.

Bogaert stopped practicing law in 2004 and participated in the Elizabeth Foundation Studio Center in New York City. He had his first solo exhibition in NYC in 2008 with the legendary *Jack the Pelican Presents* gallery and he has widely exhibited in Europe, the Middle East and the US. Bogaert's work has been written about in publications such as The New York Times, The Miami Herald, JO-magazine, NY Arts Magazine, Baladna, the Daily Star and Al-Akhbar.

Tom Bogaert lives and works in Amman, Jordan

www.tombogaert.org

al Hoash Gallery

al Hoash is a not for profit Palestinian cultural organization based in Jerusalem and located on the first floor of an old 1930's traditional Arabic house on Zahra Street, a busy road in the heart of the commercial centre. Al Hoash was established in 2004 with a mission to integrate visual arts and culture in the lives of the Palestinian community and contribute to the development and elevation of this sector, recognizing its importance and crucial role in maintaining Palestinian cultural identity. We aspire to establish the first Palestinian art museum in Jerusalem; an institution for the public wherein visual culture can be acquired, conserved, researched, interpreted, communicated and exhibited.

Our aims, values and policies are translated through our annual programs: the Visual Arts Program featuring annually curated exhibitions, film screenings and a photography competition; the Educational Program based on accumulative art workshops, open days, short term workshops, artist talks and discussions; the Research and Book Publishing Program and the Documentation Program.

www.alhoashgallery.org

