

Press Release

Lebanon Now

New Media Art Exhibition

From 21 to 30 June 2008

Between 11 am and 7 pm (except Sundays)

Opening : Friday 20 June at 6 pm

LAA Gallery

Al Wagf Addurzi Bldg. 2nd floor

Verdun Street. Beirut

Information:

Suzanne Khairallah

Mobile : +961 3 756 404

Email : lbaaps@gmail.com

The Association of Lebanese Artists presents « Lebanon Now », the art exhibition of the new media. Sponsored by USAID, this exhibition shows works done with the latest technological means. These works question Lebanon today, which is more disconcerting and intriguing than ever. The artists experiment with the binary code and look at Information and Communication Technology from a new perspective. There is no doubt that the sociocultural and the sociopolitical are featured. The artists «tell » their Lebanon through the elements of their numerical world, i.e. images, sound, and words. This event transposes the observer (turned into user) into a new esthetic experiment. It is the long-awaited occasion both by the artists and an art (and technology)-loving public to experience together a form of contemporary art involving not only the observer but also an important team of scientists and computer engineers without whom the new media art would simply be disembodied.

The participating artists

Jean-Louis Eddé and Hayla Saab Demelero

Type of work: Telepresence device

Title: Message not delivered

© 2008

Through their « Message not delivered », the two artists build a representation of themselves in society, where elements from their respective lives in relation with their real-life experiences are featured. They deal with the issues of immigration and long-distance relationships through a telepresence system.

Charbel Haber and Yara Raffoul

Type of work: Audio website

Title: 6 O'clock

© 2003

The work of these two artists is defined as a leisurely walk that can be perceived in two manners. On the one hand it is a graphic and visual stroll accompanied by music, noises, and sound patches. This same road can also be perceived in the opposite direction: it is the graphic that represents the music. This walk remains a free walk of traditional page layout, proportion, typography, and even readability.

Mansour El-Habre

Type of work: Experimental website

Title: How he lost his right hand finger

© 2008

Mansour El-Habre presents a website where the user browses around and collects elements aiming to answer the question: « What did he do to lose his right hand middle finger as a child? ». The reply is attained through a labyrinthine navigation that puts the user in front of numerous disturbing possibilities that question the reality of the civil war of 1975.

Rabih Khalil

Type of work: Internet Search Engine

Title: Lebanon everywhere

© 2008

The artist presents a Search Engine under the name « Lebanon everywhere ». It is a letter collector that searches exclusively for the letters composing the word « Lebanon ». In any text appearing on any website, the letters that constitute the word « Lebanon » are automatically selected, reassembled, and displayed.

Ricardo Mbarkho

Type of work: Digital images

Title: Digital visuals from Lebanon

© 2008

Ricardo Mbarkho presents « Digital visuals from Lebanon », a series of digital images printed on large format photo papers based on the numerous agreements signed by the Lebanese State since the independence of Lebanon. In order to obtain these images, the artist uses the capacity of the computer to render the files containing the texts of these agreements as if they were image files. The computer calculated the binary code of each text file and generated the corresponding image. The series comprises images of binary codes of texts such as: the Doha agreement, the Taef accord, the Lebanon-Syria Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination, the tripartite agreement, the Cairo agreement, the national pact, the Lebanese constitution, as well as the word « Lebanon » itself.

Nadia Oufriid

Type of work: Online theatre

Title: Dialogue

© 2008

Nadia Oufriid presents an online play entitled « Dialogue ». Once the user is connected to the project's website, he is greeted by two virtual actors on a virtual stage. They recite texts taken from two URL addresses randomly selected by the system. The user can change the URL

addresses to his liking and therefore change the dialogue of the actors, as by drawing from various Lebanese sites (political, artistic, or other). The various emotions that characterize the lines are rendered by the tone of the voice, the noises, and the music.

Shawki Youssef

Type of work: Online interactive game

Title: Construct Lebanon

© 2008

Shawki Youssef's project is an online game on the possibilities of a potential « construction » of Lebanon, based on the daily political speeches. The screen displays the pieces of a puzzle that constitutes the map of Lebanon. The player has to manually assemble the pieces, but his success depends on the choice of the « words » of politicians that are published in newspapers. Some « words » might lead the player to victory and end the game whereas others would lead to a higher difficulty level and thus extend the game's duration.