

01. Hussein Shikha,
Ethereal Garden, 2022

02. Firas El Hallak,
Ruin in Ruin, 2022, 20 minutes

03. Tarek Haddad / Laetitia El Hakim,
A Stretch of Water, 2021

04. Kais Masood,
Untitled - Bucharest, Romania, 2019/2020

05. Joanna Kai,
Goosebumps, 2022, 3 minutes

06. Clara Abi Nader,
Tu viens d'où ?, 2020, 10 minutes

07. Mousa AlNana,
Unorthodox Heretics, 2019
Left: *Whisper*
Right: *I Kissed Him Goodbye*

08. Karen Keyrouz,
#1: *The Last Ride*, 2022 (left)
#2,3,4,5: *Fragments of Lost Memories*, 2022

09. Asma Laajimi,
Terrain du Permis, 2021, 6 minutes

10. Micheline Nahra,
A Dinner for One, 2019

11. Diana Al-Halabi,
Delivered Home With No Eye Contact, 2019/2020

12. Firas Shehade,
Generative Territory Speculative Algorithms, 2023,
7 minutes

13. Christina Atik,
Angry Sun, 2022

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Tashattot Collective

Tashattot (Arabic for dispersion) is an art collective based in Belgium dedicated to supporting visual artists, musicians, film makers and cultural practitioners at large, originally from the SWANA region and currently “dispersed” in Europe. The collective aims at creating opportunities, collaborations, commissions and securing funding for these expatriate artists regardless of their ethnicities, gender identities or religions.

The word *tashattot* and its English equivalents *scattering/dispersion*, define the collective in both the literal sense of the word (pertaining to the description of the individuals scattered around the world, far from their homelands), as well as its metaphorical sense which relates to the scattering and dispersion of ideas and ways of thinking, as the word in Arabic is oftentimes used to describe the wandering of the thoughts (*tashattot al afkar* or scattered thoughts).

Tashattot is a work in progress and a newly launched collective with a fluid and evolving set of actions. It currently is and will always remain open to new ideas and experiences; continuously building on lessons learned and with practice. The collective strongly believes in the efficiency of open discussions, as the only way to grow and better address SWANA expat artists needs and aspirations, it therefore remains open to reviews, critiques, evaluations or any opinions related to its mechanisms.

EXHIBITS

tashattot collective

Asma Laajimi, Christina Atik, Clara Abi Nader,
Diana Al-Halabi, Firas El Hallak,
Firas Shehadeh, Hussein Shikha, Joanna Kai,
Kais Masood, Karen Keyrouz,
Micheline Nahra, Mousa AlNana,
Tarek Haddad/Laetitia El Hakim

21.01 – 19.03.2023

Exhibited artworks

01. Hussein Shikha *Ethereal Garden*, 2022

Shikha explores in his project “Ethereal Garden” the cryptic notions of co-occurrences; the presence and absence of visual cultures, acts of migration and integration, and the formation of counter-hegemonic action in the margins (third space). Pixel by pixel, the imagery presents itself as virtual excavations of Digi-glyphs extracted from microliths, found in the debitage of what has been stolen and misunderstood. This second-hand archival software material is carefully constructed following philosophies associated with carpets resulting in a hardware digital carpet, signaling a personal process of starting over inherent in migration and placemaking. The synthesis of lived experiences of migration and the margins allows for the expansion of global historiography that is open to new theorizations and thus situated historical perspectives that could be produced. Thinking with bell hooks, we understand the margins as the sites of potentiality and resistance.

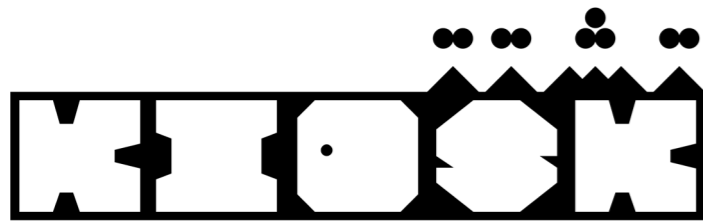
The digital carpets entail ☼ a translation of Utu, the deity of the Sun, represented by a winged solar disc, ☆ a translation of Inanna, the deity of Venus, represented by a figure enacting a ritualistic dance in a speculative and transformative stream of significant gestures, and ☾ a translation of Nanna, the deity of the Moon represented by a bull’s horn.

02. Firas El Hallak *Ruin in Ruin*, 2022, 20 minutes

Site-specific sound installation – *Ruin in Ruin* is a sound installation which explores and reflects on the natural course of history which turns everything into rubble. Sutured into these reflections are an oral collection of a decaying present. Through the march of history, how do present tales of glory turn into future obscurities? How do you recount stories of decay amidst decay?

03. Tarek Haddad / Laetitia El Hakim *A Stretch of Water*, 2021

The work takes allegory in the sea, both as a starting point and as a boundary. It expands on the notion of distance, exploring its repercussions on human interactions within two concurrent contexts; one instilled by the pandemic, preventing contact with one another, and a second imposed by the failing economic and political situation in Lebanon, pushing many to leave. Under tension, the material property of the fabric and the strain exerted through the stretching raise the question of whether we are eventually bound to attain a rupture point, one after which the surface cannot retract back to its original state.



04. Kais Masood

Untitled - Bucharest, Romania, 2019/2020

In the face of displacement, driven by a sense of loss, nostalgia can manifest as a romance with one's own fantasy, longing for a place that no longer exists, or perhaps that never has. In the realm of detachment, the present is swallowed by the chasm between the sorrow of the past and the yearning for a utopian future. It is from this chasm that the first self-portrait emerged, a way to express feelings that were difficult to grasp, and therefore to communicate.

In his early drawings, Kais depicts the self realistically, it was blue. Over time, this figure becomes more ambiguous, taking on the form of an extraterrestrial. The color blue, however, is the only element that remains the same. This sublimation allows the artist to confront the various facets of his own estrangement, and to reveal the feelings and thoughts it entailed—love, loneliness and grief. The original drawings are painted in bright colors, suggesting a safer state and a more vibrant place, parallel to reality. This practice accompanies Kais throughout his journey of self-discovery and acceptance. However, two years later, looking back and processing a pale experience, it is detaching to look at them in color.

05. Joanna Kai

Goosebumps, 2022, 3 minutes

After moving from Lebanon to France in 2021, Kai shot and wrote the video *Goosebumps* which was inspired by a paragraph in Jonas Mekas' book *I Had Nowhere to Go*. In her video, the artist translates the feeling of alienation in a foreign city, which she was suddenly forced to call home, and the confusion of having to wake up in a strange place while catching glimpses of her past life.

06. Clara Abi Nader

Tu viens d'où ?, 2020, 10 minutes

Tu viens d'où ?, a video by Clara Abi Nader, was created following the Beirut port explosion on August 4th, 2020. The artist chose to dive back into her archived photographs of the city, ones she took before moving to Paris in 2011. Abi Nader invites the viewer to accompany her on her journey of grief over Beirut, a journey she went through from far away, while questioning origins, collective identity and the importance of the question *Tu viens d'où ?* (Where are you from?) in today's world. The supporting material are cyanotype prints of the passport and other items which Clara used during the start of her journey while moving to France.

07. Mousa AlNana

Unorthodox Heretics, 2019

(left: *Whisper*/right: *I Kissed Him Goodbye*)

Unorthodox Heretics, a project by artist Mousa

AlNana, highlights the emotion and humanity of the queer community in the Middle East, and those who were cast away for being themselves in a supposedly safe space. Portraying the struggle, the pain and the war which is fought by the queer community on a daily basis, AlNana's paintings "Whisper" and "I Kissed Him Goodbye" tackle the topics of separation and the hope of finding a better place, as, even if they leave and become refugees, there will always be new walls to break and challenges to overcome.

08. Karen Keyrouz

#1: The Last Ride, 2022 (left)

#2,3,4,5: Fragments of Lost Memories, 2022

Karen Keyrouz's works are based on ink blots which are eventually transformed to create a mixture of peculiar scenes. The artist's technique forms shapes that resemble and reference distorted memories and glimpses of her past in Beirut.

09. Asma Laajimi

Terrain du Permis, 2021, 6 minutes

From a summer routine; a swim with her father, Asma Laajimi traces the journey of an urban space that cradled her childhood and that she sees disintegrating little by little into a post-apocalyptic space. Through "terrain du permis", the artist reflects on the harsh realities of her hometown, Sousse. The city has been hit not only by the abandonment of its seasonal dynamics, but also by a parasitic coldness of a careless government. It suffers physical disintegration and continues to absorb decisional toxins that seep deep into its land and sea. With an alarmed yet passive gaze, the artist sails through space in her happy footsteps, hoping to find a memory she could recognise from a time that seems so far away in this ghostly city.

(Text by curator Salma Kossentini.)

10. Micheline Nahra

A Dinner for One, 2019

Micheline Nahra has disassembled a four-person dinner setting and rebuilt it for one person, in a bid to make absence visible. A Dinner for one tells a story of loss, it is a signifier of absence, a former normalcy of life that is absent, and a situation that has been transformed into a memory. Starting from a table and four chairs, she deconstructed the objects into their constituent parts, worked on the individual elements and reconstructed the new table and chair. Raised in war-torn Lebanon, this process of deconstructing and reconstructing is a way of exploring the relationship between objects and the layering of stories in them. "Where I come from destruction is a reality and reconstruction is inevitable". The pieces reflect the human need to retrace the past, preserve memories, and rebuild what is broken.

11. Diana Al-Halabi

Delivered Home With No Eye Contact, 2019–2020

Diana Al-Halabi presents in her series of paintings "Delivered Home With No Eye Contact", the imperfections of technology by painting the impossible eye contact during a video call. Being far from home, the artist addresses the reality of distance that cannot be broken through a phone call, when one is neither here nor there and eventually becomes a ghost stuck in a labyrinth of memories.

12. Firas Shehadeh

Generative Territory Speculative Algorithms, 2023, 7 minutes

Using AI, algorithmic and computational power to recreate images of Palestine and Palestinians. Those abstract images work against digital colonial erasure and surveillance.

13. Christina Atik


Angry Sun, 2022

"Angry Sun" is a personal letter about what it's like to build, rebuild and let go of the different types of homes that one tends to accumulate over a lifetime, from family to friends to cities. The letter is addressed to the city of Beirut located in Lebanon which has recently gone through many changes; economic and political. The text poses the question "what's the best way to watch home burn", while the main illustrated character tries to climb up to the angry sun to wear it as a mask and finally be able to let go of her anger. The fire mask, at times controlled and at others wild, symbolizes the anger that takes over as one fights for a home and the pain that comes with having to let it go.

Thanks to: the artists + Yara Al Chehayed, Charbel Alkhoury, Isabelle Arthuis, Fareed Aziz, Thomas Billas, Rose Braeckman, Jihane Chartouni, George Chinnery, Simon Delobel, Deborah Ephrem, Jenifer Evans, Théa Hallak, KASK Cinema (Elisa De Schepper en Lennart Soberon), Gaëlle Khalife, Ruben Laflere, Le Fresnoy (Natalia Trebik), Rami Moukarzel Thomas Peeters, Sara Plantefève-Castryck, Els Roelandt, Sepehr Sharifzadeh, Bader Shashit, Rémie Vanderhaegen, Lien Van Leemput, Matthias Willems, Yalla Sound System, the KIOSK Saviours and the whole team of KASK & CONSERVATORIUM School of Arts Ghent.

 Do you sometimes feel scattered?

 How does exile impact an artistic practice?

 How would you implement fair practices in a fundamentally unfair world?

Tashattot x KIOSK

Curator: The Tashattot Collective

Opening: 21.01.2023, 5pm – 8pm

Open: mon – sun, 12pm – 6pm

Closing: 19.03.2023

Louis Pasteurlaan 2, 9000 Ghent, Belgium

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