

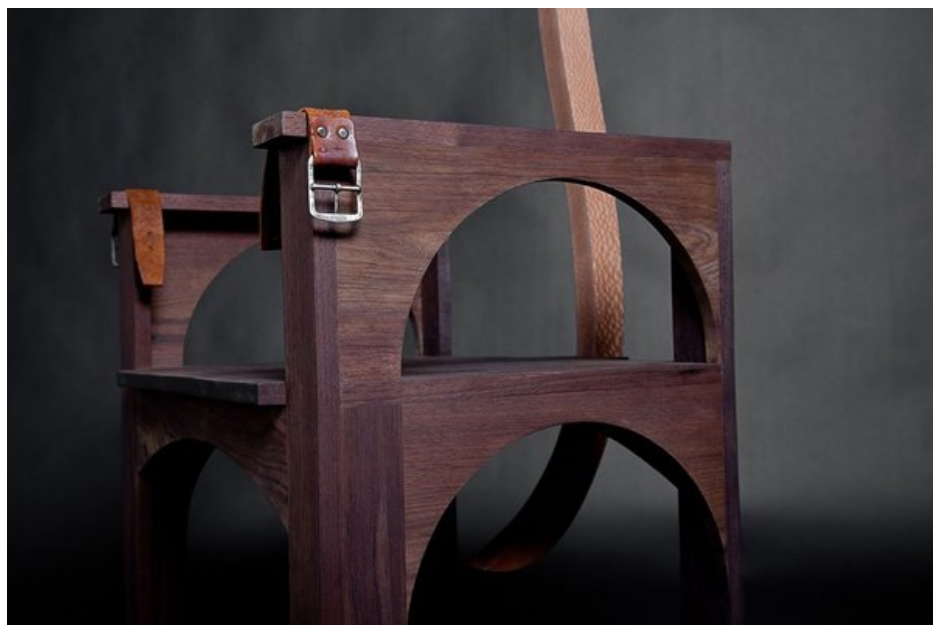


Platform for discussion 004

WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, WHAT ROLE DOES NEW MEDIA PLAY IN ARTISTIC PRACTICES, ACTIVISM, AND AS AN AGENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA TODAY?

Sama Alshaibi

2 November 2012



Sama Alshaibi

vs. The Ruler, 2011

Detail of female throne, wood, leather, brass, speakers, sound, variable dimensions

Nadour Collection

Image courtesy of the artist and Lawrie Shabibi



vs. The Ruler was made during the first year of the Arab uprising. It is comprised of two custom-made wooden 'electrocution' chairs (thrones) sitting in opposition to each other. The patriarchal male throne suggests the military and religion. Its counterpart is also suggestive of Islamic architecture, but is grounded by the human spine. Embedded with audio-scapes, the chairs invite audiences to sit and listen to the other's 'trial'. The male

A platform is a space for speaking in public. It is an opportunity to express ideas and thoughts. It also suggests the formal declaration of a stance or position on any given subject.

Unique to Ibraaz is a 'platform', a question put to writers, thinkers and artists about an issue relevant to the MENA region. This platform is sent to respondents both in and beyond the MENA region and it will change every six months.

MANDY MERZABAN

Using new media tools and technologies available today has become standard practice for a range of activities; it's become a source of educational content and entertainment, as well as a means of communicating from conflict zones or even from the comfort of our homes. New media technologies available on smart...

SARAH SAMY

The state of the Internet, or more specifically, the state of 'online surfing' is similar to that of dreaming; things leach into each other according to a logic that does not belong to us and cannot be correlated to our chronological time; images are constantly morphing into ghosts of other...

BASAK SENOVA

Digitised media in the last decade has undoubtedly been propelled by the enormous speed of new technology and spontaneous platforms for rights, defined by Hakim Bey as 'Temporary Autonomous Zones' and 'network guerrillas' by Ozgur Uckan. Consequently, despite the mediated content of the mainstream media, social media sites have emerged...

throne weaves excerpts of various public speeches from the region's threatened dictators, which are enunciated by a single voice. In turn, the female counterpoint reverberates with the feeds from my own social media community – status updates compiled from Twitter, Facebook and blog posts. The multiple voices assembled from the dictators and online community is compressed into the singular voice of one female and one male and can only be listened to by one audience member at a time, evoking the paradox of this age of digital media and networking, in which the global, disparate and intertwined voices of so many are in the end still filtered and understood through the narrow, singular mind of one person at the receiving end of it all.

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Sama Alshaibi is an artist whose multi-media artwork negotiates spaces of conflict: the aftermath of war and exile, the power dynamics between the nation and its citizenry and the interaction between humans competing for resources and power. They expose the hidden forces that police human behaviour, or conversely, cause its rebellion. Recent solos include *vs. Him* at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai and *Zero Sum Game* at Selma Feriani Gallery, London. She also exhibited at the Institut Du Monde Arabe (Paris), Traffic Gallery (Dubai), DARB 1718 (Cairo), the Bronx Museum (NYC) and the Museum of Contemporary Art (Denver). Screenings include *Mapping Subjectivity*, MoMA (NYC), 24th Instants Video Festival (Mexico), Thessaloniki International Film Festival (Greece), and Cinema East Film Festival (NYC). Collections include Nadour (Germany), Barjeel Collection (Sharjah), EnFoco (NYC) and the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Tunisia). Alshaibi is an Associate Professor of Photography/Video Art at University of Arizona.

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