

Lara Baladi

Surface of Time



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B21 is proud to present recent works of LARA BALADI, in her first solo exhibition in Dubai. Born in Lebanon, of Lebanese-Egyptian origin, Baladi has lived in Beirut, Paris, London and Cairo, where she currently resides.

Lara Baladi is a collector of images. She relentlessly observes and explores her environment, and in this way has amassed a huge collection of photographs as well as images she has discovered in her travels. Focused on the concept of repetition and its broader application to the cycle of life, she approaches her images in their respective social and historical contexts. Still seeking to push the boundaries of traditional forms and presentation, she constantly develops and adapts new media to the needs of her art.



Her work has been exhibited internationally at various spaces around the Middle East, the U.S., Japan and Europe, and is part of a number of contemporary art collections including the Fondation Cartier in Paris, the Museet For Fotokunst in Copenhagen and the Pori Art Museum in Finland. In addition to participating in the Sharjah biennial, her installation 'Roba Vecchia, The Wheel of Fortune' was featured at the DIFC during the first Gulf Art Fair.

This exhibition, 'Surface of Time', demonstrates the wide range of media and conceptual approaches Baladi employs to astonishing effect as she explores the autonomous and pervasive nature of time. Questioning the past, observing the present and projecting the future are brought forth in Baladi's work as necessary, simultaneous and oftentimes contradictory actions. Their interplay is the principal force behind the exhibition.

Isabelle van den Eynde

18 February
13 March 2008

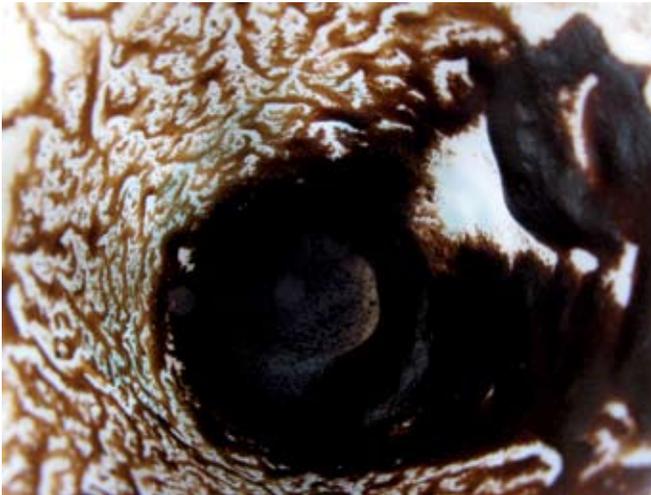
(detail) SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007

(cover) SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007

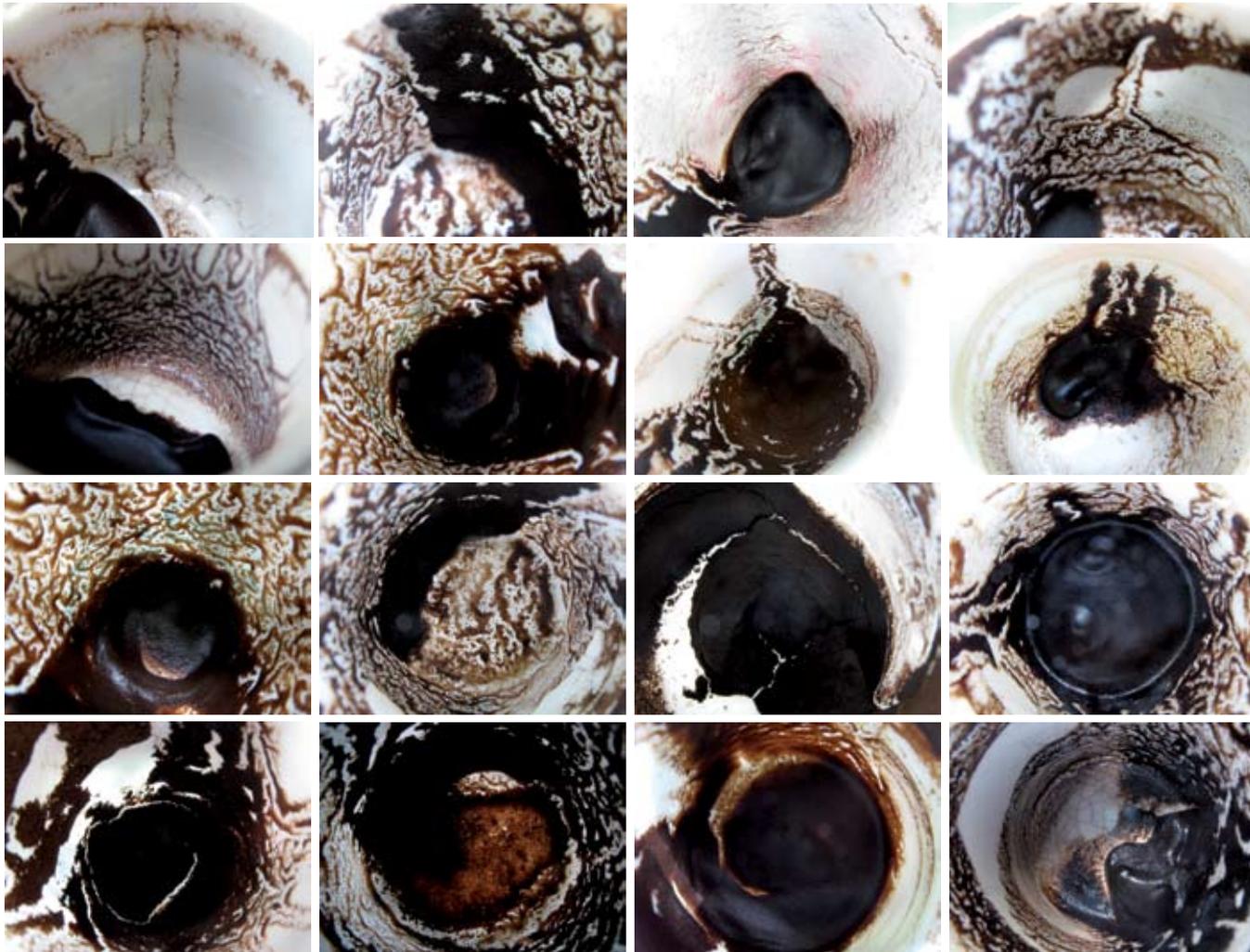
Diary of the Future

'Diary of the Future', comprised of pigment print on gesso, is a work in progress; a sample of a larger project started at the time of Baladi's father's illness when friends and family visited daily. From these visits, during which coffee was taken by each guest, Baladi has documented the traditional Arab practice of drawing portents from the coffee residue left in cups. Part of this documentation displays a mystifying matrix of images detailing the interior of the coffee-stained cups, offering a subjective reading of the imbiber's destiny and establishing the language of the ritual within the 'black stuff' at the cup's bottom. Another series of images further develops

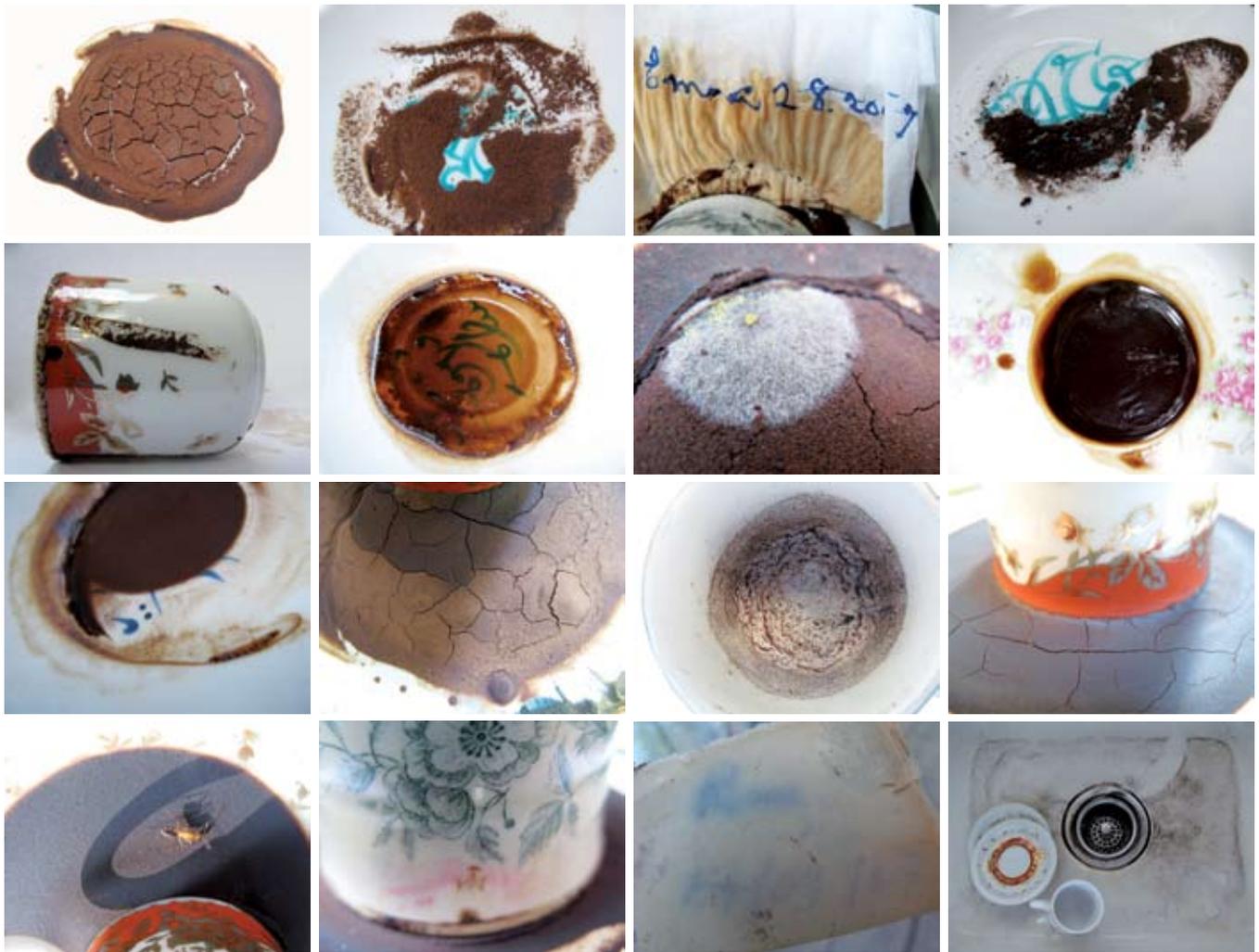
the environment in which these divinations took place, linking if only for a moment each of the visitor's destiny to that of her father and to each other. In this initial treatment of the material, Baladi addresses the elusive flux of the everyday and the personal mythologies we develop based on our understanding of a collective mythology. Despite our efforts to distinguish a unique path for ourselves, we are bound by a common language that speaks to our fleeting place within the enduring repetition of time, of the movement found within stillness.



DIARY OF THE FUTURE (01) (detail)
Pigment print on gesso
110 x 140 cm, 2007



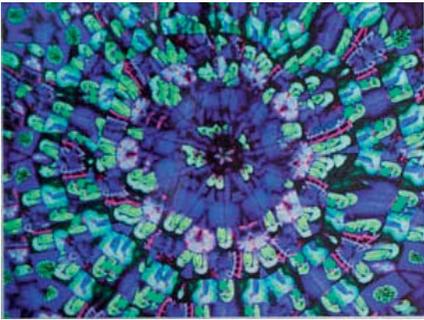
DIARY OF THE FUTURE (01)
Pigment print on gesso
110 x 140 cm, 2008



DIARY OF THE FUTURE (02)
Pigment print on gesso
110 x 140 cm, 2008

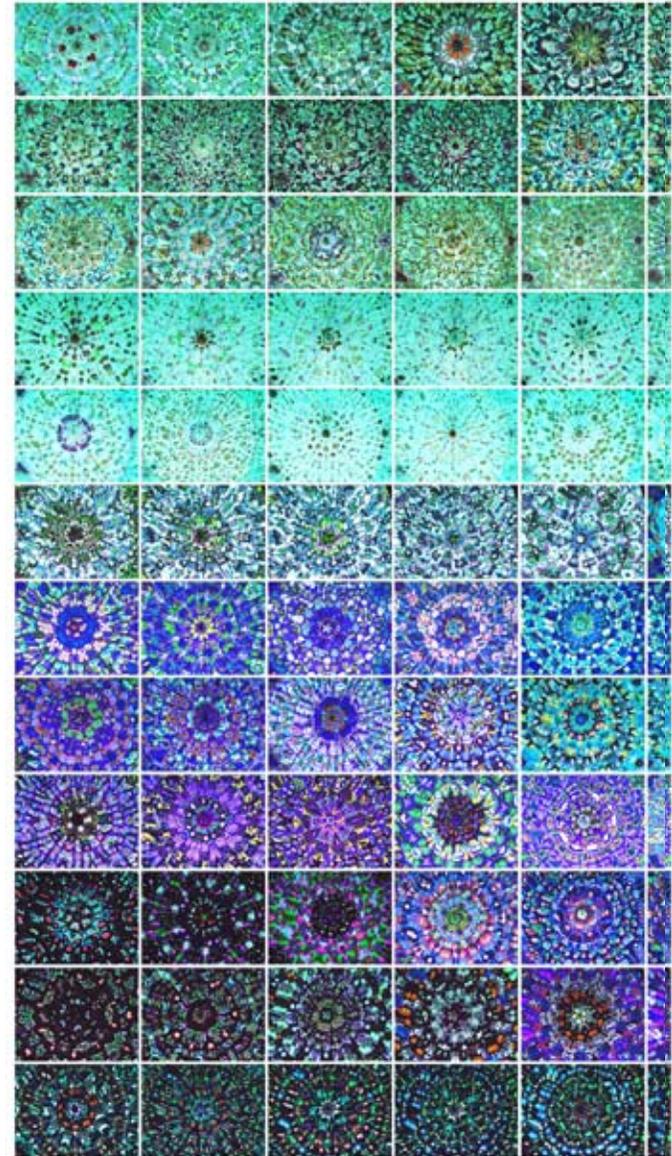
Roba Vecchia

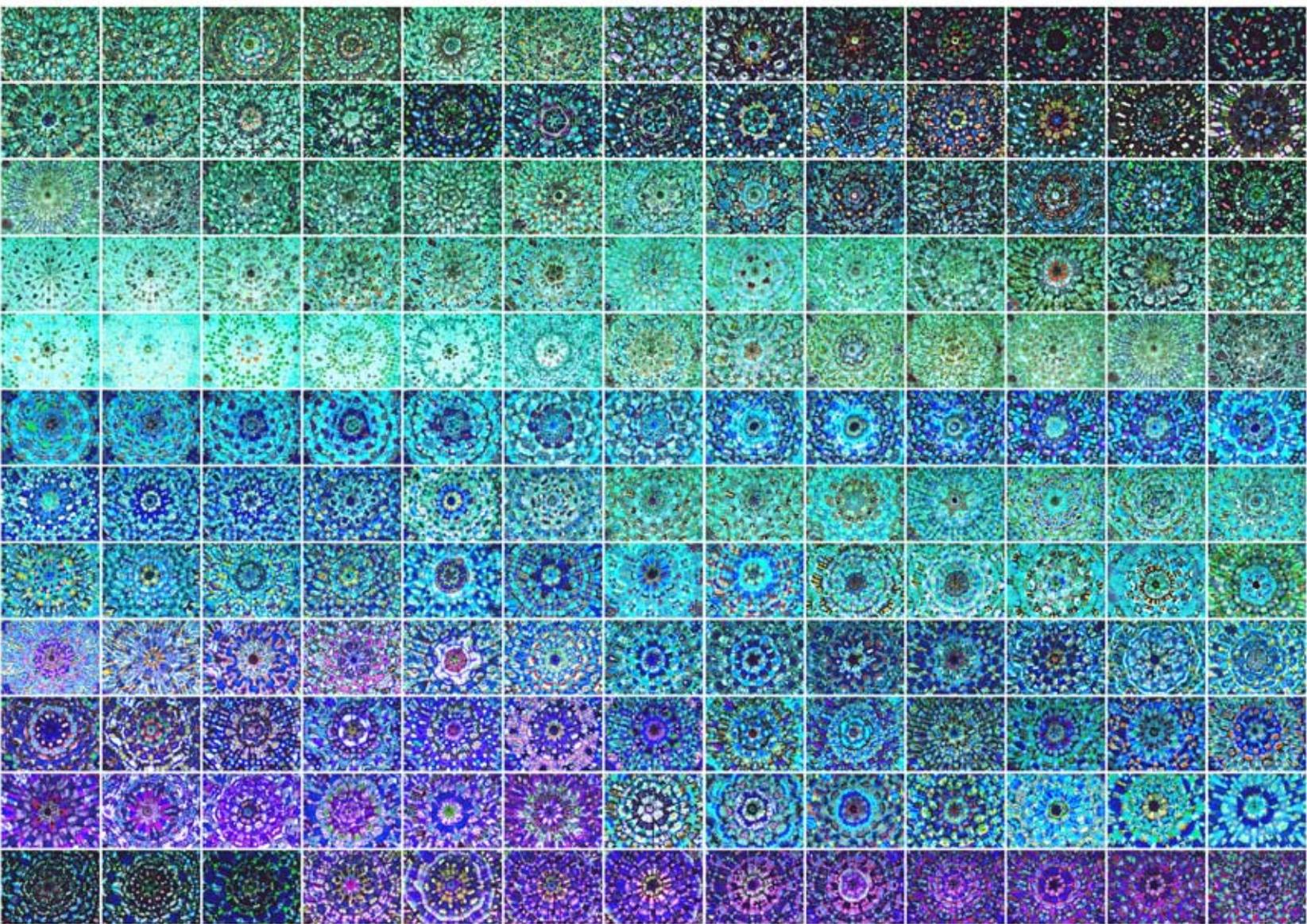
'Roba Vecchia, The Wheel of Fortune', printed on acetate and mounted on mirror polished stainless steel, is an abstract assemblage of stills from Baladi's much larger installation 'Roba Vecchia'. It's a human-scale kaleidoscopic world into which spectators enter, becoming part of the brilliant, computer-aided design. With an arresting array of colour, this two-dimension version of 'Roba Vecchia', composed of similar seemingly-repetitious patterns, upon closer inspection reveals itself as an intricate series of unique elements. Bringing to mind the arabesques found in Islamic architecture and design, each detail repeats along an infinite path within its defined space.



ROBA VECCHIA
Acetate on mirror polished stainless steel
153 x 300 cm, 2007

ROBA VECCHIA (details, above & below left)
Acetate on mirror polished stainless steel
153 x 300 cm, 2007



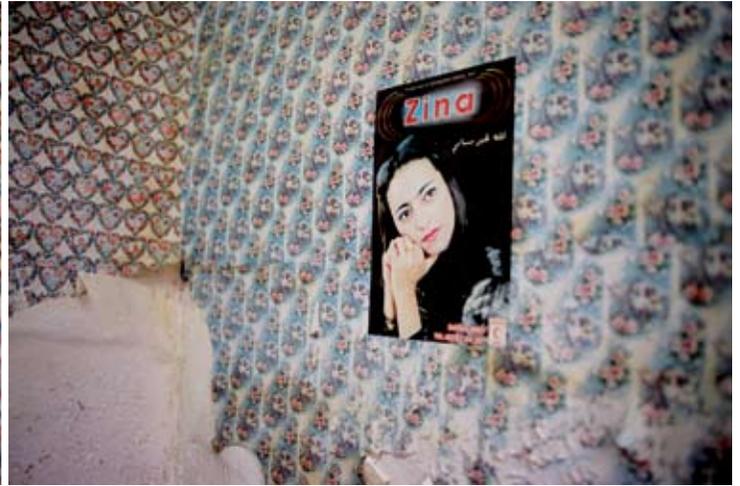


Surface of Time

Lending its name to the title of this exhibition, 'Surface of Time' is a series of photographs printed on Somerset paper - presented in this exhibition as diptychs. Here Baladi has captured everyday objects otherwise forgotten and passed-over by the hand of man but subject to the ravages of time nonetheless. Through their physical relationship to time these objects achieve a life of their own in Baladi's photography, their derelict state alluding to a rusting image of President Mubarak and the inertia of the Egyptian political and economic situation.



SURFACE OF TIME 01-02
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



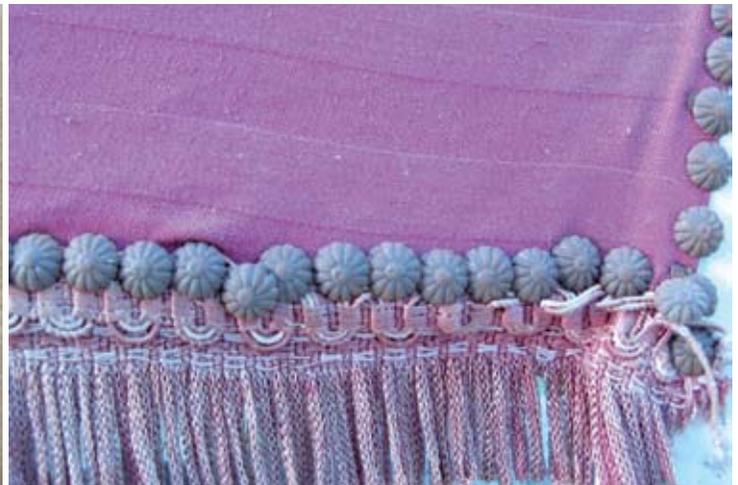
03-04 SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



05-06 SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



SURFACE OF TIME 07-08
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



SURFACE OF TIME 09-10
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



11-12 SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



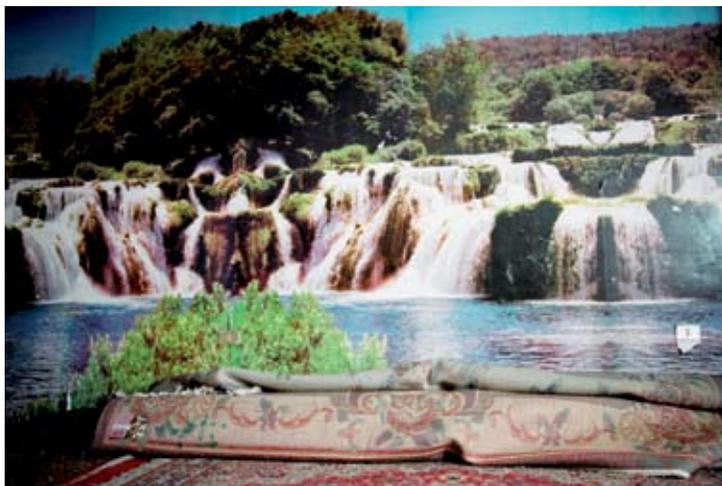
13-14 SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



SURFACE OF TIME 15-16
 Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
 49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



SURFACE OF TIME 17-18
 Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
 49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



19-20 SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



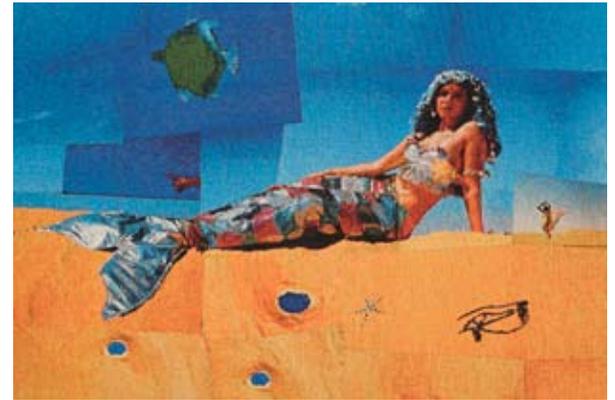
21-22 SURFACE OF TIME
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007



SURFACE OF TIME 23-24
Permanent pigment print on somerset paper
49 x 75 cm, 2004-2007

Oum El Dounia

Originally created as a large-format photo collage, commissioned by La Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, 'Oum El Dounia, The Mother of the World' has been beautifully reworked into a woven tapestry measuring 860 x 290 cm. 'The Mother of the World' in Arabic is also an expression referring to Egypt. A fantasy landscape in which disjointed sand dunes confront a patchwork marine-blue sky, Oum El Dounia is in part a study of human creation stories, embedding a cast of fairy-tale characters, which Baladi conceives as 'archetypes of a human mythology', in a world that knows both innocence and depravity. Bizarre sights such as Alice in a desert Wonderland or a man taking a turkey for a stroll crowd the ostensibly interminable sand. The desert is alive with light and magic, no longer the desolate and sterile landscape idealized by over a century of Occidental interpretation. These fantastically diverse images distort notions of proper scale and challenge the traditional Orientalist aesthetic (and its lack of both technical and intellectual perspectives) which has long influenced popular conceptions of the desert.



(detail) OUM EL DOUNIA
Woven tapestry
290 x 860 cm, 2007



OUM EL DOUNIA
The making
2007



OUM EL DOUNIA
Installation
2007



OUM EL DOUNIA

The original collage of colour photographic prints, 360 x 120 cm, 2000
Collection Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris



OUM EL DOUNIA
Woven tapestry, 260 x 860 cm, edition of 3, 2007
Ed. 2/3 presented at B21 Gallery, 2008
Right: ed. 1/3 at Brancolini and Grimaldi Gallery, Italy, 2007

Lara Baladi *Biography*

Born in Lebanon, of Lebanese-Egyptian origin, Baladi has lived in Beirut, Paris, London and Cairo, where she currently resides. Her work has been exhibited internationally across the Middle East, the U.S., Japan and Europe, and is part of a number of contemporary art collections, including the Fondation Cartier in Paris, the Museet For Fotokunst in Copenhagen and the Pori Art Museum in Finland.

In 2006, Baladi was commissioned to show a 20 screens/projections installation along one kilometer of seashore on the opening night of the Image of the Middle East festival in Denmark.

One of Baladi's large scale installations, Roba Vecchia, was created and shown in Cairo in February 2006, and has since been shown during Art Dubai and the Sharjah biennial in 2007.

In December 2006, Baladi initiated and directed Fenenin El-Rahhal, an "artists working summit" on the subject of 'Territory' in the Egyptian Western desert (www.nomadicartists.com).

Baladi received a fellowship from the Japan Foundation in 2003. She is a member of the Beirut-based Fondation Arabe pour l'Image. She lives and works in Cairo since 1997. Her work is represented by the Townhouse gallery in Cairo, by the Brancolini & Grimaldi gallery in Italy and by B21 gallery in the United Arab Emirates.

SELECTED SOLO SHOWS

Surface of Time	B21 Art Gallery, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, February 2008
Untitled	Brancolini & Grimaldi, Rome, Italy, 2007
Towards the Light	20 screens (slide show) projections along one kilometre of seashore. Opening night of Image of the Middle East Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark
Roba Vecchia	The Townhouse gallery, Cairo, Egypt, 2006
Kai'ro	lansmuseet, Västernorrland, Harnosand, Sweden, 2005-06 Nikolai, Copenhagen contemporary Art Centre, Denmark, 2005 Pori museum, Pori, Finland, 2005 Bildmuseet, Umea, Sweden, 2004
Al Fanous al Sehry	Townhouse gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, 2002
Sandouk El Dounia	El Nitaq Festival, Cairo, Egypt, 2001 Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, Lebanon, 2001
The Eye of Mary Magdalene	Galerie De Visu, Marseille, France, 1998 Mois de la Photographie, Beirut, Lebanon, 1998

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

Sharjah Biennial	Curated by Jack Persekian, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, 2007
Art Dubai	Roba Vecchia outdoor installation. Dubai, United Arab Emirates, March 2007
Frieze Art Fair	Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, London, 2006
Snaps judgments	International centre for Photography, New York, 2006 Miami Art Central, Miami, 2006 Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City, 2007 National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2007 Memphis Brooks Museum, Memphis, 2008

I-identity (ID magazine) Touring 2004 to 2007	Beijing, Long March space, 2006 Tokyo, Spiral Garden, 2006 Hong Kong Cultural Centre, International Film Festival, 2006 New York, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, 2006 Brazil, Biennale of Sao Paulo 2006 London, Fashion and Textile museum, 2005
Regards de Photographes Arabes	Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Sevilla, Spain, 2006 Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 2005-2006
Water, water everywhere...	Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona, USA, 2005
Afrika Remix	Johannesburg Art Gallery, 2007 Mori Museum, Tokyo, 2006 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005 Hayward Gallery, London, 2005 Kunst Palast museum, Dusseldorf 2004
On Difference	Kunstverein, Stuttgart, 2005
Some Stories	Kunsthalle, Vienna, 2005
Body-Con, Moving collection	Arts Initiative Tokyo, touring exhibition, Japan 2003-2004
Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine	Bamako, Mali, 2003
Disorientation	Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin, Germany, 2003
The Desert	Fondation Cartier Pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, France, 2000 Fundacion Caixa, Barcelona, Spain, 2001 Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Sevilla, Spain, 2001
The Eye of Mary Magdalene	Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2000 Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York, USA, 1999 Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, Egypt, 1999

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books	A World History of Photography, Naomi Rosenblum, Abbeville Press, New York
2008	Angaza Afrika, Christopher Spring, Laurence King Publishing In the Arab World...Now, Jerome Sans, Enrico Navarra Publishing, collection, 'made by' Interviews 2, Gerald Matt, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Verlag Walther König, Köln
2005	Territoire Mediterranée, Labor et Fides, Geneva
2000	Sleep, Coromandel Express, Paris, France
OTHERS	Zawaya magazine, Lebanon since 2003
Feature editor	Larabesque Aroussa Baladi, limited-edition prints published by Factum-Arte, Madrid, 2002
Portfolios	Baladi Collection made at Home in Egypt, launched at Espace SD, Beirut, Lebanon and the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, 2005
T-shirt collection	

About **B21** Gallery

B21 Gallery opened its doors in November 2005 and is located in a warehouse in Al Quoz, an industrial area near the centre of Dubai. Since then, the gallery has showcased more than 25 exhibitions, all emphasizing the importance of risk-taking in contemporary art. Focusing on the emergent and innovative artists of the Middle Eastern region, B21's primary goal is to discover the future rising talent. As a nexus of such artistic development, B21 Gallery continues to provide unique opportunities for collectors.

Everything began with curiosity! By exploring the region's art world and embracing its ideas and experiences, B21 challenges its visitors and collectors to unfamiliar terrain.

In recent years, globalization and fast developing cities like Dubai has been heavily criticized for destroying local identities, values and culture. At the same time, it is also confronting us with an intensely stimulating environment, carrying dilemmas but also leading the way for cultural intersection.

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Opening Hours:

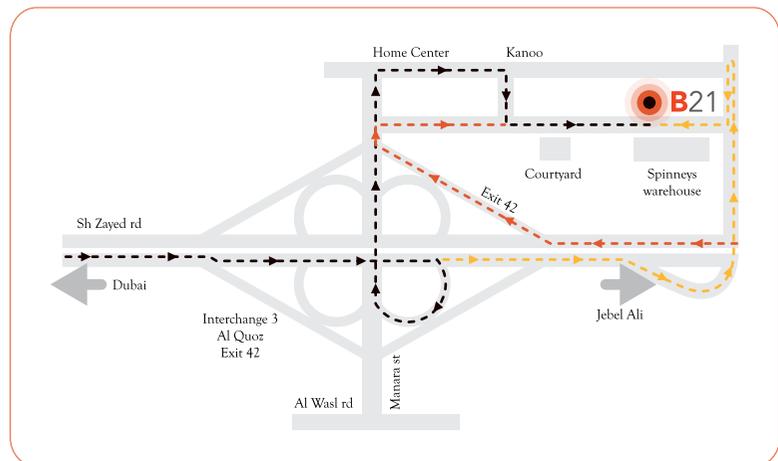
Saturday - Thursday

11am - 7pm

B21 Gallery would like to deeply thank Alexandra d'Ursel for her dedicated contribution to this exhibition.

We would also like to greatly thank Jovan Ruseski for his graphic design equanimity.

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B21 GALLERY



Audi ArtExperience



canvas
ART AND CULTURE FROM THE WORLD'S BEST AND NEW WORLD