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MODEL OF MOTIONS

SAMA ALSHAIBI & MICHAEL FADEL

June 18–August 15, 2021

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, June 18, 5–7pm

ARTIST TALK: ALSHAIBI, FADEL & ANNE FARRELL

Saturday, June 19, 2–3pm

SCREENING: FUTURE FATES BY THE EYES OF TIME

Saturday, June 26, 2pm



© Sama Alshaibi & Michael Fadel

(June 2021) “*Model of Motions* delivers an ominous message,” write award-winning artists Sama Alshaibi and Michael Fadel, “that in the age of globalization we are on a path towards annihilation.” Alshaibi and Fadel mount their multimedia installation *Model of Motions* at form & concept, opening June 18. An official satellite show of the CURRENTS New Media Festival 2021, the display features their collaborative piece *Swell*, a kinetic sculpture featuring a rocking wooden boat, gypsum sand and an anchor. This ever-shifting artwork is accompanied by a short video titled *Footsteps*. As a whole, the installation carries visitors to historic and futuristic contexts from the Middle East to Northern Africa, linking the displacement caused by the Silk Road to today’s refugee crises across the globe. An Opening Reception will be held on Friday, June 18, 5-7pm, and an artist talk featuring Alshaibi, Fadel and CURRENTS artist Anne Farrell will take place on Saturday, June 19 from 2-3 pm. Also in conjunction with CURRENTS, the debut screening of the feature-length film *Future Fates* by The Eyes of Time will take place on Saturday, June 26 at 2 pm.

Swell’s undulating motion, made possible through two mechanical elements (at the base of the boat and within the hull), slowly tips gypsum sand onto the floor of the gallery. This literal and metaphorical jetsam falls atop a snaked anchor with a long chain. Its coiled and sinuous path recalls intertwining times, places and people. It is covered and uncovered by shifting sand and natural airways as visitors surround and view the companion video, which features a protagonist fruitlessly charting course by rowboat in an arid desert. “We wanted to foreground the elasticity of time itself, and the cyclical nature of our social histories in relationship to ecological demise,” says Alshaibi, who notes the metaphorical mirror of the Silk Road in the project’s conceptual fabrication. “Both [Fadel and I] were born in Middle Eastern countries that we were uprooted from due to war, and whose contemporary environmental, social and political stability teeter on the edge of collapse. In our respective practices, we speak to the alienation of the physical and physic conditions of that experience through a spare yet emotive framework. It was a natural evolution for us to create a project that eludes to the historic movement of goods and peoples across physical and metaphorical place.”

In addition to Alshaibi and Fadel’s satellite show for CURRENTS 2021, form & concept will present two CURRENTS-adjacent projects as part of the gallery’s *Summer Show 2021*. Santa Fe-based artist Anne Farrell presents a 3D-printed diorama with a maquette of *Tidy House*, which mirrors her immersive *Tidy House* installation in the main CURRENTS display at Center for Contemporary Arts. The Eyes of Time, a Velarde-based creative collective, debuts a sculptural installation that connects to a larger experience in the Railyard Arts District, and debuts their feature-length film *Future Fates*. Watch the trailer [here](#).

Sama Alshaibi, born 1973 in Iraq, situates her own body as a site of performance in consideration of the social and gendered impacts of war and migration. Her work complicates the coding of the Arab female figure found in the visual history of photographs and moving images. In addition to showing in over 150 group and solo exhibitions across the globe, Alshaibi received the first prize Project Development Award from Center (Santa Fe, 2019), the 2018 Artist Grant from the Arizona Commission on The Arts

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and the 2017 Visual Arts Grant from the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (Beirut). She was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Scholar Fellowship in 2014-2015 as part of a year-long residency at the Palestine Museum in Ramallah, where she developed an education program while conducting independent research. In 2021, Alshaibi was named a Guggenheim Fellow in Photography.

Michael Fadel was born in Lebanon to a Lebanese father and American mother and now resides in New Haven, CT where he works in his studio. He taught as an adjunct instructor at the University of Arizona and at Southwest University of Visual Arts alongside his practice as an artist. Fadel earned a BFA from Winthrop University and a MFA from the University of Arizona—both in sculpture and received many distinctions, including the Centennial Award, the Edward Francis Dunn Scholarship, and is a Medici Scholar. Fadel's technical skills have been employed in Dubai for Ayyam Gallery and the 55th Venice Biennale as fabricator for artist Sama Alshaibi.

ABOUT CURRENTS NEW MEDIA 2021 FESTIVAL

The annual festival of new and experimental media returns to The Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA) 19 years after its inaugural debut in 2002. A portion of the Santa Fe-based festival will be exhibited at CCA's Tank Garage Gallery spaces. 25 artworks, ranging from interactive installations to videos, multimedia performances, new media sculpture and virtual/augmented reality experiences will be on view June 18 through the 27th. Reserve tickets for timed entry on opening and closing weekends [here](#).

ABOUT FORM & CONCEPT

form & concept challenges the perceived distinctions between art, craft, and design. We dispute the historic use of these terms to divide artists and rank material culture. Our programming acts as a conversation between many converging disciplines, harnessing the power of contemporary creative practice to shatter entrenched narratives. form & concept mounts exhibitions of regional and international art. We engage the community through educational initiatives including workshops, lectures, and artist residencies.

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3 QUESTIONS WITH SAMA ALSHAIBI

You made *Model of Motions* with Michael Fadel. Could you talk on that collaboration process?

Michael and I had already been working together on sculptural elements of my own solo work for a number of years before we embarked on a joint collaboration. For *Model of Motions*, we conceived the project meaning together from its inception and made all of the production and formal decisions together. We both have medium strengths and led the fabrication and production in our respective disciplines.

We worked so closely together for years, including his serving as my principle fabricator and exhibition technician on major installations at Venice Biennale and in Dubai. I have also provided him feedback with his projects. We were incredibly familiar with each other's creative impulses and intellectual aspirations, so working together was both intuitive and fun. We also share a similar familial history. Both of us were born in Middle Eastern countries that we were uprooted from due to war, and whose contemporary environmental, social and political stability teeter on the edge of collapse. In our respective practices, we speak to the alienation of the physical and psychic conditions of that experience through a spare yet emotive framework. It was a natural evolution for us to create a project that eludes to the historic movement of goods and peoples across physical and metaphorical place.

Your work incorporates mechanical elements and a video installation. How does this connect to the work's conceptual thrust?

Both mechanical sculpture and video provide meaning through time. We wanted to foreground the elasticity of time itself, and the cyclical nature of our social histories in relationship to ecological demise. The video, a contemporary medium, has the capability of imagining space outside of a rational context of time and place. We converged a reading of climate change as one breaking down the historic routes of the Silk Road through the video performance of a protagonist rowing across the barren desert, and through the precarious qualities of a mechanical machinery rocking a wooden boat, undulating the displaced gypsum sand as both cargo and metaphor.

***Model of Motions* is our featured artwork for the CURRENTS New Media Festival 2021. What excites you about producing hybridized projects like this?**

I understand the CURRENTS New Media Festival as an encounter of international and regional dialogue through an interdisciplinary and technological lens. We are eager to share *Model of Motions* through this framework, as our installation was founded on the historical intertwining of cultures, communities and commodities. A hybrid of digital and analogue mediums, the installation synergizes concept and craftsmanship with audience experience.