

[inaudible]



Lawrence Abu Hamdan

April 7 - May 26, 2018

Opening

Saturday, April 7 — 6pm - 9pm



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Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Disputed Utterance, 2018

mor charpentier is pleased to announce **[inaudible]**, Lawrence Abu Hamdan's first solo show in France. For his exhibition, Abu Hamdan investigates sounds at the threshold of audibility. The title **[inaudible]** is derived from how transcribers and stenographers categorize human speech or any other noise that cannot be heard or could not be made intelligible in a courtroom. A voice that is impossible to write, a sound that cannot be transcribed, speech that does not form part of the historical record, except in its very inaudibility. Those **[inaudible]** voices and sounds, not yet intelligible to the political ear, become the site of struggle in the artists' politics of listening.

In the installation **The recovered manifesto of Wissam [inaudible] (2017)**, Abu Hamdan collects old cassette tapes wrapped around fruit trees in the Chouf Mountains of Lebanon. By analyzing the remains of an incomprehensible voice once recorded in these surfaces, he heard the voice of a man identifying himself as "Wissam [inaudible]", who is heard delivering a manifesto about the elusive concept of 'Taqiyya', a concept often incorrectly understood as the right to lie. In reality, 'Taqiyya' is the speaker's ability to adapt his language to convey his message.

In **Disputed Utterance (2018)**, the artist presents a series of charcoal drawings and photographs that mimic the linguistic process of palatography, a method used to identify which parts of the mouth are used when making different sounds. It involves painting a mixture of charcoal and olive oil on the tongue or the roof of the mouth and having that person pronounce a specific word. The trace of the phoneme is then printed on the speakers' palate in charcoal. Abu Hamdan uses these images in order to tell different narratives of what in legal cases is referred to as a

'disputed utterance', a trial where someone's culpability or innocence is hinged upon conflicted claims over a recorded word or phrase. By using actual disputed utterances from real legal cases, Abu Hamdan calls our attention to the ways in which our voices can become crime scenes.

Finally, the installation titled **"Woooooooah" [gasp] (2018)** reviews the trial of the Paralympic champion, Oscar Pistorius. The trial was dedicated to discovering if he had intended to kill Reeve Steenkamp through the bathroom wall or if it was an accident. Pistorius testified that he believed that he was shooting at an armed intruder behind the wall. Accepting that he could not see through the wall, the attention of the court turned to how permeable the structure was to the sound of her voice. In the gallery, Abu Hamdan presents a 1:1 scale drawing of the crime scene. Based on digital acoustic modeling of the space, Abu Hamdan defines the extent to which the sound leaks through the bathroom wall. The dip of the doors acoustic absorption is here correlated to the peak intensity and pitch of Steenkamp's scream to create an image that shows the wall not as a solid divide but rather as an elastic membrane that both filters and contains sound but also deforms under the sonic pressure of a scream. By visualizing the acoustic space in this way we see that although the wall blocked entirely his capacities to see Steenkamp, the shooter's ability to hear her and identify her voice through the wall is undeniable.

[inaudible] seeks to use the space of visual art as a means to experiment with sources of testimony and open up new kinds of sonic claims, new pathways by which we can hear, among other things, how we ourselves are being heard by the long ear of the law.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan (1985) is a British-Lebanese artist and audio investigator currently based in Berlin, Germany. In his art and investigations, Lawrence Abu Hamdan explores the perception of language, sound and the politics of listening. His interest into sound merges with his background in DIY music and storytelling, creating hybrid investigation-led works.

Using the format of the radio documentary, lecture-performance, or film, his projects are often text/sound compositions complemented by graphic visualizations of sonic architecture. Discourses of national identity, human rights and the administration of justice are recurrent themes in his art, and the techniques of his audio-aesthetic practice have become the basis through which he has become known as a “private ear”, conducting forensic audio analysis for several legal investigations.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Hammer Projects: Lawrence Abu Hamdan*, Hammer Museum, LA (2018); *Earshot* at Portikus, Frankfurt, *Taqiyya* at Kunsthalle St Gallen (2015); *Tape Echo* at Beirut in Cairo and Van AbbeMuseum, Eindhoven (2013); *The Freedom Of Speech Itself* at Showroom, London (2012), *The Whole Truth* at Casco, Utrecht (2012).

Additionally his works have been exhibited and performed at institutions and international events such as Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2017); Contour Biennale, Mechelen, Belgium (2017); MACBA, Barcelona, Spain (2017); Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2017); Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2016); 9th Liverpool Biennial, UK (2016); The Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2016); Beirut Art Center (2015); The Shanghai Biennial (2014) and Tate Modern, London, UK (2013), among others.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan has won the 2018 Abraaj Art Prize and the 2016 Nam June Paik Awards.

List of works

Ground floor

Disputed Utterance, 2018

- Four digital prints

15 x 31,5 cm / 5,9 x 12,4 inches

30 x 31,5 cm / 11,8 x 12,4 inches

45 x 31,5 cm / 17,7 x 12,4 inches

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

- Seven charcoal and oil drawings

60 x 85 cm / 23,6 x 33,4 inches

Unique piece

“Woooooooooah” [gasp], 2018

Vinyl

Dimensions variable

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Lower ground

The recovered manifesto of Wissam [inaudible], 2017

Installation

Dimensions variable

Edition of 5 + 2 AP