

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA PRESENTS BASEL ABBAS AND RUANNE ABOU-RAHME'S *MAY AMNESIA NEVER KISS US ON THE MOUTH* IN THE KRAVIS STUDIO

A Multichannel Sound and Video Installation Will Feature Evening Performances by the Artists and Invited Musicians

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme's *May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth*

April 23, 2022–June 26, 2022

The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio

NEW YORK, NY April 4, 2022—The Museum of Modern Art presents Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme's *May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth* (2020–ongoing) in the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio, April 23 through June 26, 2022. Over the past decade, artists Basel Abbas (Palestinian, b. 1983) and Ruanne Abou-Rahme (Palestinian American, b. 1983) have collected, sampled, and created audiovisual materials, recasting them into new multimedia works. Taking the contemporary moment in Palestine as a point of departure, their research-based practice imagines new artistic and political possibilities through sound, image, and text. This evolving work, co-commissioned by MoMA and Dia Art Foundation, is presented as an online platform for the Artist Web Projects series at Dia and an immersive installation with performances at MoMA. In the multipart project *May amnesia...*, the artists bring together found and self-authored footage to examine how communities bear witness to experiences of violence, loss, displacement, and forced migration through song and dance. The exhibition at MoMA is organized by Martha Joseph, the Phyllis Ann and Walter Borten Assistant Curator of Media and Performance.

Since the early 2010s, Abbas and Abou-Rahme have collected online recordings of everyday people singing and dancing in communal spaces in Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. This work brings these recordings together with new performances created by the artists with dancer Rima Baransi and electronic musicians Haykal, Julmud, and Makimakkuk, working in Ramallah, Palestine. According to Abbas and Abou-Rahme, through song and dance, “these fractured communities are resisting their own erasure and laying claim to space, self, and collectivity once more.” Ultimately, in creating *May amnesia...*, the artists consider performance—whether in the form of song, spoken word, dance, or gesture—as a political act that responds to myriad forms of violence against entire communities.

For this presentation in the Kravis Studio, Abbas and Abou-Rahme have created an immersive, multichannel sound and moving-image work within a custom installation environment titled *Only sounds that tremble through us*. Drawing on videos from the artists' archive as well as the performances they created, this work addresses communities deemed “illegal”—their land, histories, and built structures. Footage appears and reappears, sampled and remixed, presenting an entanglement of images, sounds, and bodies. A new eight-channel sound composition features processed vocals, electronic beats, and audio samples from the archive and performances. A fragmented text written by the artists, proposing that simply breathing becomes a form of resistance, weaves throughout the video.

Additionally, the Kravis Studio will host a series of ticketed, evening performances that take the *May amnesia...* archive as inspiration. Abbas and Abou-Rahme will present a new two-person performance titled *an echo buried, buried, but calling still* (2022). For selected performances, electronic musicians Hiro Kone, SCRAAATCH, and Muqata'a will also contribute new work that responds to the exhibition. *an echo buried, buried, but calling still* will conclude with a post-performance conversation with the artists and MoMA curator Martha Joseph on Saturday, June 25, following the 7:30 p.m. performance. The exhibition will also be accompanied by movement workshops with dance artist Angie Pittman in The Paula and

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James Crown Creativity Lab on April 27 and 30 and an evening of video and conversation on June 13 as a Modern Mondays event (details to be announced).

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

Saturday, June 4, 7:30 p.m.

Hiro Kone

Hiro Kone is the project of New York–based musician and producer Nicky Mao. She uses a combination of hardware, synths, and modular to cultivate her sound—a visceral meditation on rhythm, noise, and melody that characterizes her releases on leading experimental labels including DAIS Records and BANK Records. Responding to the precariousness of humanity, Kone’s cascades of twisted field recordings find a partner in the effervescent current of synthesis and, in the process, forge new sonic terrains.

Sunday, June 5, 7:30 p.m.

SCRAAATCH

E. Jane and chukwumaa (aka MHYSA and lawd knows) of SCRAAATCH create multimedia performances, experimental music, and hybrid DJ sets. They focus on Black diasporic intra-communication, generational traumas, social upheaval, and the social conditions of urban environments. SCRAAATCH sources sounds, images, and physical objects that represent ever-morphing urban and digital landscapes, reflecting on the sociopolitical dynamics within these spaces.

Saturday, June 11, 7:30 p.m.

Muqata’a

Muqata’a is an electronic musician based in Ramallah, Palestine. Produced using sampled material, field recordings, and electronic devices, the results range between harsh beats, abstract tones, and glitch. He cofounded the Ramallah Underground Collective (2002–09), and is part of the sound and image performance group Tashweesh alongside artists Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme.

Sunday, June 12, 7:30 p.m.

Jam session with Basel Abbas, Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Hiro Kone, and Muqata’a

Thursday, June 23, 7:30 p.m.

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme’s *an echo buried, buried, but calling still*

Saturday, June 25, 7:30 p.m.

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme’s *an echo buried, buried, but calling still*

This performance will conclude with a conversation with the artists and MoMA curator Martha Joseph.

Sunday, June 26, 7:30 p.m.

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme’s *an echo buried, buried, but calling still*

Capacity is limited; tickets may be purchased on [moma.org](https://www.moma.org) beginning one month before each performance date.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Basel Abbas was born in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 1983. Ruanne Abou-Rahme was born in Boston in 1983. They have exhibited internationally, most recently at the Art Institute of Chicago (2021), the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Netherlands (2020), Proyecto Ultravioleta, Guatemala City (2019), and Disjecta, Portland, Oregon (2019). Their work has additionally been featured in solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Hamburg (2018), Alt Bomontiada, Istanbul (2017), the Office for Contemporary Art, Oslo (2015), the Institute of

Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2014), Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne (2014), and the Delfina Foundation, London (2009). In 2015 their work was included in the Sharjah Biennial, where they were awarded the Sharjah Biennial Prize. Abbas and Abou-Rahme live in both New York City and Ramallah.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Movement Workshop with Angie Pittman

Wednesday, April 27, and Saturday, April 30, 1:00 and 3:00 p.m.

Floor Two, The Paula and James Crown Creativity Lab

Dance artist Angie Pittman will explore sensation and impulse through movement. This 60-minute workshop will consider how the body relates to memory and history, expanding on themes in *May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth*. Inspired by Abbas and Abou-Rahme's archive of everyday people singing and dancing, participants will practice movement as both individual and collective experiences.

This workshop is free and open to all, with no experience or ability required. Registration is required and capacity is limited; visit moma.org to register and for more information.

SPONSORSHIP:

The exhibition is presented as part of The Hyundai Card Performance Series.

Major support is provided by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Director's Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art.

Generous funding is provided by the Lonti Ebers Endowment for Performance and the Sarah Arison Endowment Fund for Performance.



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