

MEKHITAR GARABEDIAN

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born November 6, 1977 in Aleppo, Syria

lives and works in Ghent, Belgium

education

1999-2003, University College Ghent, Faculty of Fine Arts (KASK), MFA Visual arts, Photography

1995-1998, Sint-Lukas Brussels University College of Art and Design, Audiovisual arts

residencies

Slade School of Fine Art, London, U.K., 06/09/2009 - 10/02/2010

Advancing Performing Arts Project VI: The Art of Survival, artistic views on the social, Szene, Salzburg in collaboration with Buda Arts Centre, Kortrijk, Belgium and Workspace, Brussels, 2007/2008 (cat.)

Laboratory, Buda Art Centre, Kortrijk, Belgium, 09/2005 - 12/2005

exhibitions

solo/duo exhibitions

Young Man Blues, KIOSK, Ghent, Belgium, 19/02 - 28/03/2010

The End, Again, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 6/12/2009 - 11/01/2010

Learning Piece: Be Patient, My Soul, Argos, Centre for Art and Media, Brussels, Belgium, 31/03 - 11/04/2009

Something about today, Beurschouwburg, Brussels, Belgium, 20/11 - 20/12/2008

Intimacy is being angry ..., ArtBrussels, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Belgium, 18 - 21/04/2008 (cat.)

Takaaki Izumi - Mekhitar Garabedian, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 16/03 - 27/04/2008

Happy when it rains, BE-PART, Platform for Contemporary Art, Waregem, Belgium, 15/05 - 2/07/2006 (cat.)

group exhibitions

2010

Multiple Solitude, De Garage, Cultuurcentrum Mechelen, Belgium, 18/12/2010 - 27/02/2011

Manières Noires/Black Outs, BAM, Beaux Arts Mons, Belgium, 2/10/2010 - 13/02/2011

Dwelling-In-Travel, Art Today Association, Centre for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 11/09 - 5/10

Gustav, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Knokke, Belgium, 13/08 - 26/08

Mini Market, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 29 - 31/05

ArtBrussels, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Brussels, Belgium 28/04 - 2/05

The Armory Show, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, New York, USA, 4 - 7/03

The Haifa Mediterranean Biennale, Haifa, Israel, 19/02 - 6/04

Changez! A Belgian Show, 21 Rozendaal, Enschede, The Netherlands, 24/01 - 9/05

2009

TIME IS A BOOK, Ghent, Belgium, 13/11/ 2009 (cat.)

Uit het geheugen, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent, Belgium, 10/10/2009 - 2/05/2010 (cat.)

ArtForum Berlin, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Germany, 24 - 27/09 (cat.)

Arte Santander, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Spain, 22 - 26/07

The Biennale Knokke, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Knokke, Belgium, 11/07 - 6/09

Video Vortex 4 Exhibition, Multimedia Cultural Center, Split, Croatia, 21 - 26/05

ArtBrussels, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Belgium, 24 - 27/04

Something else!!!!, MAN, Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro, Italy, 6/02 - 19/04

2008

5th Fair of Culture, Studentski Centar, Zagreb, Croatia, 11 - 14/12
The Ariane de Rothschild Art Prize, Turn & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium, 28/11/08 - 11/01/09 (cat.)
Next, Buda Arts Centre, Kortrijk, Belgium, 22/11 - 6/12
Working Title Festival, WorkspaceBrussels, Belgium, 8 - 16/11
ArtForum Berlin, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Germany, 30/10 - 3/11 (cat.)
Monologische Dialoge, Tanzfabrik, Berlin, Germany, 29/10 - 2/11
XS, Ghent Belgium, 25 - 28/09
Belgier, aktuelle Kunst aus Belgien, Figge/von Rosen Galerie, Köln, Germany, 22/08 - 2/10
Collection Presentation, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium, 19/07/08 - 25/01/09
Fragile, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 15/06 - 31/08
From Armenia with love, GEMAK, Den Haag, the Netherlands, 28/04 - 11/05
Fresh #3, Buda Arts Centre, Kortrijk, Belgium, 18 - 20/04
Minimal Waves, L'écurie, Brussels, Belgium, 21 - 22/03
Trends 2008, St-Barbara chapel, Ghent, Belgium, 1 - 15/03
ArtRotterdam, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, the Netherlands, 7 - 10/02

2007

Aperto, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Torino, Italy, 9 - 11/11
Artissima, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Italy, 9 - 11/11
Open, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, 26 - 28/10
In de wind #1, cc Strombeek, Belgium, 1/10 - 31/12
Open Archive #1 - Re:collections: acquisitions 2005-2007, Argos, Brussels, Belgium, 29/09 - 10/11
Gasthoven '07 - Zonevreemd, cc Het Gasthuis, Aarschot, Belgium, 6 - 30/09 (cat.)
Silent Revolutions, Chancart - Kruidtuin/Bibliotheek Tweebronnen, Leuven, Belgium, 6/07 - 2/09 (cat.)
MARTa Schweigt, MARTa, Herford, Germany, 2/06 - 7/10 (cat.)
ArtBrussels, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Belgium, 20 - 23/04
Act 2: 50 Years Antigone Theatre, Kortrijk, Belgium, 26 - 28/01

2006

Fortis Young Ones Award, LineArt, the Art Fair, Ghent, Belgium, 1 - 5/12 (cat.)
KASK@LineArt, LineArt, the Art Fair, Ghent, Belgium, 1 - 5/12
Parcours Video Installations, Beurschouwburg, Brussels, Belgium, 24/11 - 23/12
*Youngst*rs II*, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 24/11 - 23/12
mankind, Story of a wound, S.M.A.K. and C.R.K.C., Leuven and Heverlee, Belgium, 16/09 - 19/11 (cat.)
Trends 2006, St-Barbara chapel, Ghent, Belgium, 10 - 19/02 (cat.)

2005

Attack!, Buda Arts Centre - Dans in Kortrijk and Limelight, Kortrijk, Belgium, 13 - 16/04

2004

Undercurrent, Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Centre, Istanbul, Turkey, 6/05 - 12/06
Eclips, cc Bornem, cc Willebroeck, cc Puurs, Belgium, 18/04 - 30/05
Trends 2004, St-Barbara chapel, Ghent, Belgium, 12 - 28/03

2003

Contemporary Photography from Flanders, Historical Museum, Tbilisi, Georgia, 12 - 30/11
aLOSTaSOULS #1, Network Art Centre, Aalst, Belgium, 25/10
Coming People, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium, 5/07 - 25/08

academic

since 2008: guest professor, since 2009: guest professor and researcher
Faculty of Fine Arts (KASK), University College Ghent

screenings

Open Archive # 2, Argos, Centre for Art and Media, Brussels, Belgium, 3/11 + 12/11/2010
Break Even Store, IFFR, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 27/01 - 7/02/2009
Kaskades #2, KASK, Sphinx, Ghent, Belgium, 16/11/2009

publications

Yavreeges hokeet seerem (My beloved/my little one, let me love your soul) - KIOSK, Ghent, 2010
M. et moi, Céline Butaye and Mekhitar Garabedian - Szene/Buda Arts Centre/WorkspaceBrussels, 2008
Yerkaran (Songbook), 1890 - 1923 SONGS - C.R.K.C., Leuven/S.M.A.K., Ghent, 2006
Happy when it rains - Toohcsmi Uitgevers/Publishers, 2006

collections

S.M.A.K., Municipal Museum for Contemporary Art, Ghent, Belgium
Argos, Centre for Art and Media, Brussels, Belgium
The Shoes or no shoes? Museum, Kruishoutem, Belgium
private collections

grants and prizes

grant of the Flemish community, 2010
grant of the Flemish community, 2009
winner of The Ariane de Rothschild Art Prize, Brussels, Belgium, 2008
nominee, Fortis Young Ones Award, Lineart, Ghent, Belgium, 2006
Prize Legate Franciscus Pycke, 2003, University College Ghent, Faculty of Fine Arts (KASK)

commissioned works

Tu, que me lees, ¿estás seguro de entender mi lenguaje?
permanent public artwork, commissioned by the city of Genk, Belgium, 2009

magazines

A Prior #20, Ghent, Belgium, spring 2010
Code #8, Brussels, Belgium, winter 2008 - 2009
Kunst Nu, Vrienden van het S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium, 09/2003 - 10/2003

catalogues

5 Years of BE-PART, BE-PART, platform for contemporary art, Waregem, Belgium, 2010
Over vorm (Flower Power, deel twee), Hans Theys, Croxhapox, Ghent, 2009
Kunst & Architectuur in Genk 2007 - 2009, Cahier 6, Stad Genk, dienst Cultuur, 2009
TIME IS A BOOK, Time festival 2009, Ghent, Belgium, 2009
Artforum Berlin 2009, Germany, 2009
Uit het geheugen. Over weten en vergeten, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent, Belgium, 2009
S.M.A.K. 07/08, S.M.A.K., Ghent Belgium, 2009
The Ariane de Rothschild Art Prize, Brussels, Belgium, 2008
Desire, ArtForum, Berlin, Germany, 2008
APAP VI: The Art of Survival, artistic views on the social, Corpus/Transforma, 2008
Contemporary Art in Belgium 2008, Stichting voor de Kunsten in Brussel, Belgium, 2008

ArtBrussels 2008, Belgium, 2008
Gasthoven '07 - Zonevreemd, cc Het Gasthuis, Belgium, 2007
Contemporary Art in Belgium 2007, Stichting voor de Kunsten in Brussel, Belgium, 2007
Silent Revolutions, Chancart, Belgium, 2007
Marta Schweigt, MARTa Herford, Germany, 2007
Trends 2006, Ghent, Belgium, 2006
mankind, Story of a wound, C.R.K.C. and S.M.A.K., Belgium, 2006
Lineart 2006, Ghent, Belgium, 2006
Trends 2004, Ghent, Belgium, 2004
Eclips, cc Bornem, cc Willebroek, cc Puurs, Belgium, 2004

literature

Seebad mit Guerilla-Flair, Ingeborg Wiensowski, Spiegel Online - 10/08/2010
Eigentijdse memorie van Kriemann en Garabedian, Inge Braeckman, Hart nr.63 - 4/03/2010
Kiosk is half museum, half experiment, Sven Rammeloo, de Standaard - 22/02/2010
Gent is mini-S.M.A.K. rijker, Karel Van Keymeulen, de Gentenaar - 20/02/2010
Elk einde: een begin, Inge Braeckman, Hart nr.60 - 24/12/2009
Learning as not to forget, Heleen Rodiers, Brussel Deze Week, Agenda - 06/04/2009
Collectiepresentatie S.M.A.K., Jan Evens, Zone 09 nr.234 - 21/01/2009
Schilderkunst is elastisch, Christine Vuegen, Hart nr.45 - 26/12/2008
Qui a peur de la peinture?, Claude Lorent, La Libre Belgique - 11/12/2008
Niveaus van indiscretie, Pieter Van Bogaert, Hart nr.44 - 4/12/2008
Rote Punkte und traurige Ritter, Elke Buhr, Frankfurter Rundschau - 31/10/08
De taal van de kunst, Hans Theys, Hart nr.40 - 11/09/2008
Belgier. The dark side of art, Inge Braeckman, Hart nr.40 - 11/09/2008
Die Schattenseite des schönen Scheins, Bettina Deschler, Kölner Stadt Anzeiger - 5/9/2008
Kunst onder een rieten dak, Jan Van Hove, De Standaard - 6/08/2008
From Armenia with Love, Riet van der Linden, Beelden nr.43 - 28/08/2008
Armeense diaspora blijft onduidelijk in 'Gemak', Nathalie Hartjes, Den Haag Centraal, nr. 48 - 11/04/2008
Tegen het vergeten van een genocide, Haroon Ali, Trouw - 18/04/2008
'Silent Revolutions' in Leuven, Gerrit Vermeiren, Hart nr.24 - 12/07/2007
Vreemdeling van 100 jaar geleden, Bert Popelier, De Tijd - 5/12/2006
Wreedheden blijven in het geheugen hangen, Th. C. Madder, Kerk + Leven - 09/2006
Kwetsbaarheid wordt kunst, Geert van der Speeten, De Standaard - 29/09/2006
Happy when it rains, Sarah Kessene, UrbanMag - 08/2006
Zonder romantiek, Luk Lambrecht, Knack - 14/06/2006
Het in beeld brengen van identiteit, Luk Lambrecht, Knack website - 5/06/2006
Je bent wat je spreekt, Gerrit Vermeiren, Hart nr.7 - 1/06/2006
Mekhitar Garabedian: Happy when it rains, Tom Viaene, Goddeau - 19/05/2006

lectures

Étrangers à nous-mêmes / Strangers to ourselves, seminar "Cliniques de la création", FUNDP (Faculty for Philosophy and Literature), Namur, Belgium, 6/05/2010
Artist Talk, KIOSK, Ghent, Belgium, 18/03/2010
Everything I can't say / All that I can't say, 'Invitation au Voyage, Kunst als voertuig voor mentale reizen', Symposium Leerstoel Karel Geirlandt, University Ghent, Belgium, 2 - 4/12/2009
De stilte van de polyglotten, seminar "Cliniques de la création", Department for Psychoanalysis and Clinical Consulting, Ghent University, Belgium, 17/11/2009
And that's why I'm happy when it rains, SIC, Sound Image Culture, Netwerk, Aalst, Belgium, 11/06/2009

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some works



YOUNG MAN BLUES

2010, neon sign, 91 mm x 2671 mm and sound installation, audio-DVD, 1h 34min



FIG. A, A COMME ALPHABET, FEB. 2010

2009 - 2010, magic marker on wall, variable dimensions



YAVREEGES HOKEET SEEREM (MY BELOVED/MY LITTLE ONE, LET ME LOVE YOUR SOUL)

2010, publication, 204 mm x 138 mm, 16p, soft cover, colour
graphic art by and co-edited with Céline Butaye



CALENDERS

1997 - 2010, ongoing collection of calenders



GIFTS, T-SHIRTS

made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

2010, installation, 11 T-shirts (ongoing collection - objets trouvés), hangers, washing line



TÙ, QUE ME LEES, ¿ESTÁS SEGURO DE ENTENDER MI LENGUAJE?

2009, neon, 400 mm x 1480 mm

commision, city of Genk (Belgium)



THE VERY BEST OF

made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

2009, oil painting, approx. 47,5 cm x 31,8 cm

Painting of a record sleeve (from the collection of the municipal library of Gent) of the album *the very best of* by the legendary Lebanese singer Fairuz.



THE END, AGAIN

made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

2009, golden ring, wax, aprox. 5,8 cm x 3,5 cm x 1,5 cm, pencil on paper 21,2 cm x 20,8

A traditional golden wedding ring with the engraving: 'The End, Again' on the outside and inside of the ring. 'The End, Again' is the title of a sub-chapter from John Gray's *Black Mass* (2007).



FIG.

2009, magic marker, address book



FIG. A, A COMME ALPHABET, KORK (CARPET)

2009, (handwoven) carpet

-Hi, I'm Kit.
I'm not keeping you from anything
important. Am I.

-No.

-Just thought I'd come over and
Say Hello to you.
I'll try anything once.

...
What's your name, I said mine.

-Holly

-Listen Holly. You... I don't know...
you wanna take a walk with me.

-What for?

-Oh, I got some stuff to say
I guess I'm lucky that way
Most people don't have anything
on their mind, do they.

From Badlands, T. Malick. Library of Mekhitar Garabedian

HI, I'M KIT, FROM BADLANDS (1973)

2009, magic marker on wall, variable dimensions

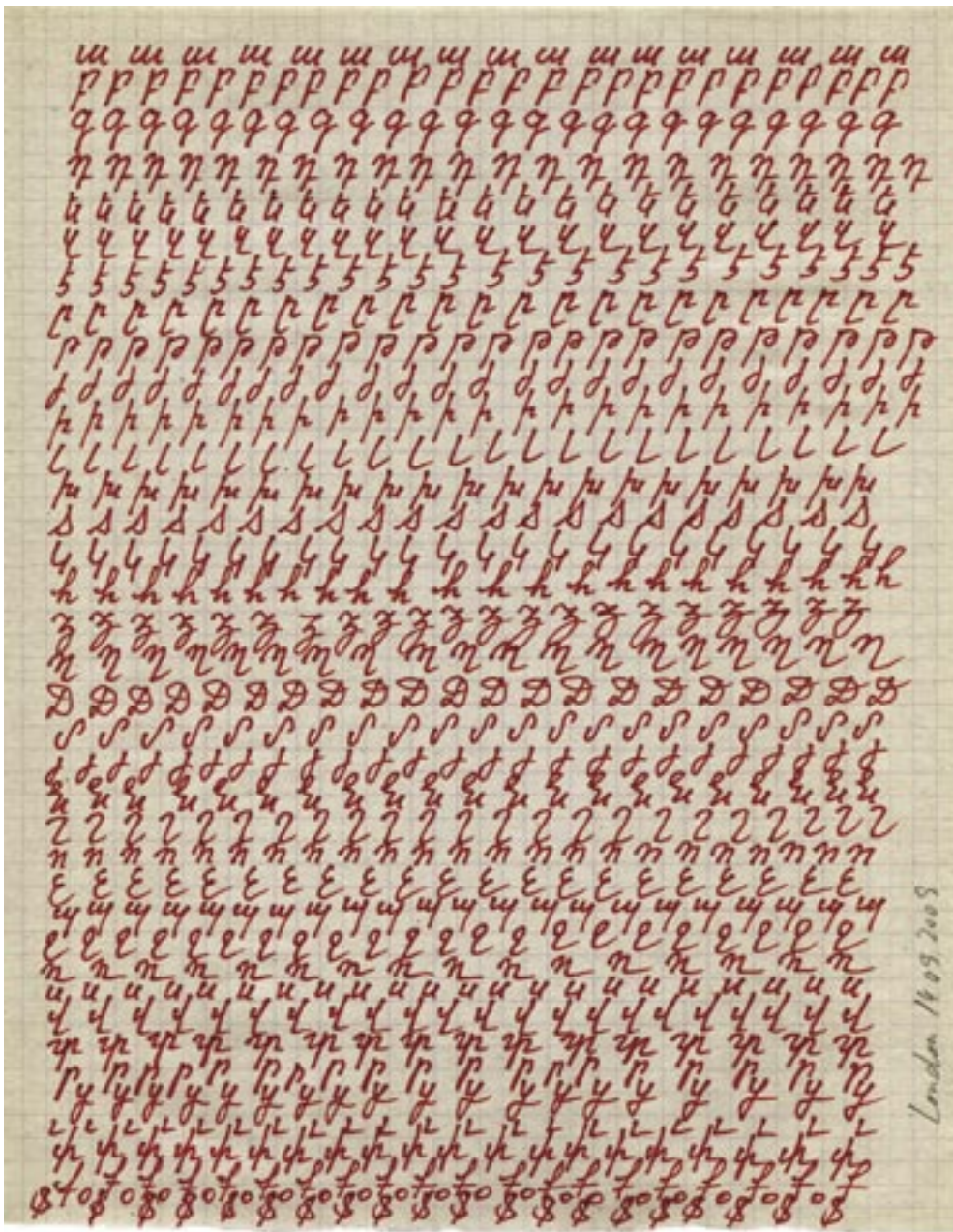


FIG. A, A COMME ALPHABET

2009 - 2010, pencil, pen, magic marker on paper, variable dimensions



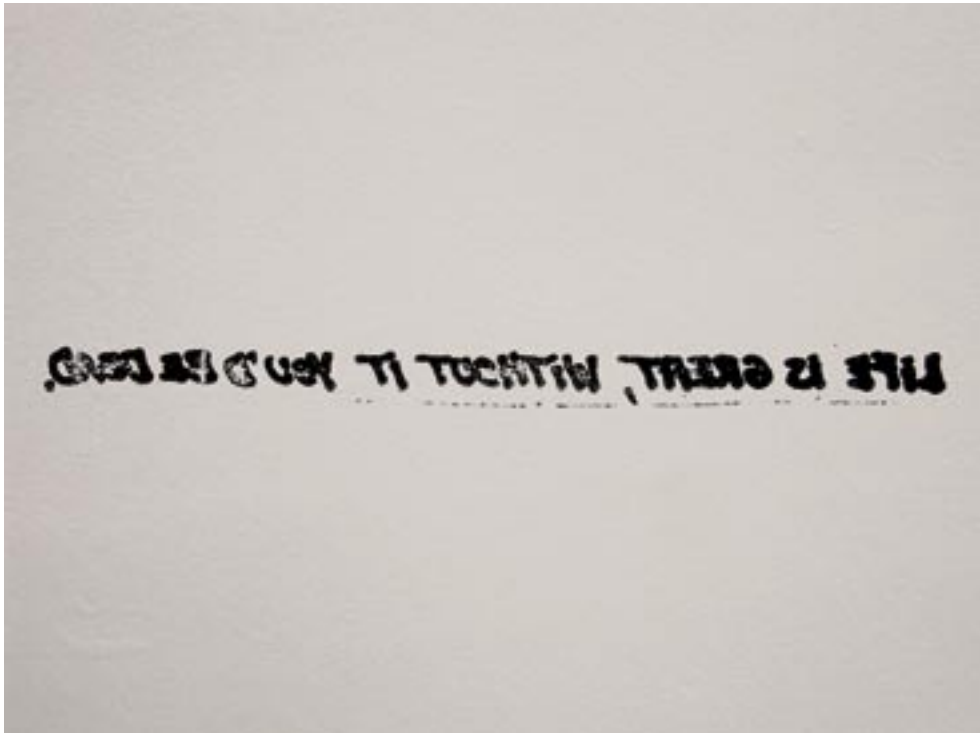
GENTBRUGGE 1999 - 2009

1999 - 2009, 12 photographs



GENTBRUGGE 1999 - 2009

1999 - 2009, 12 photographs



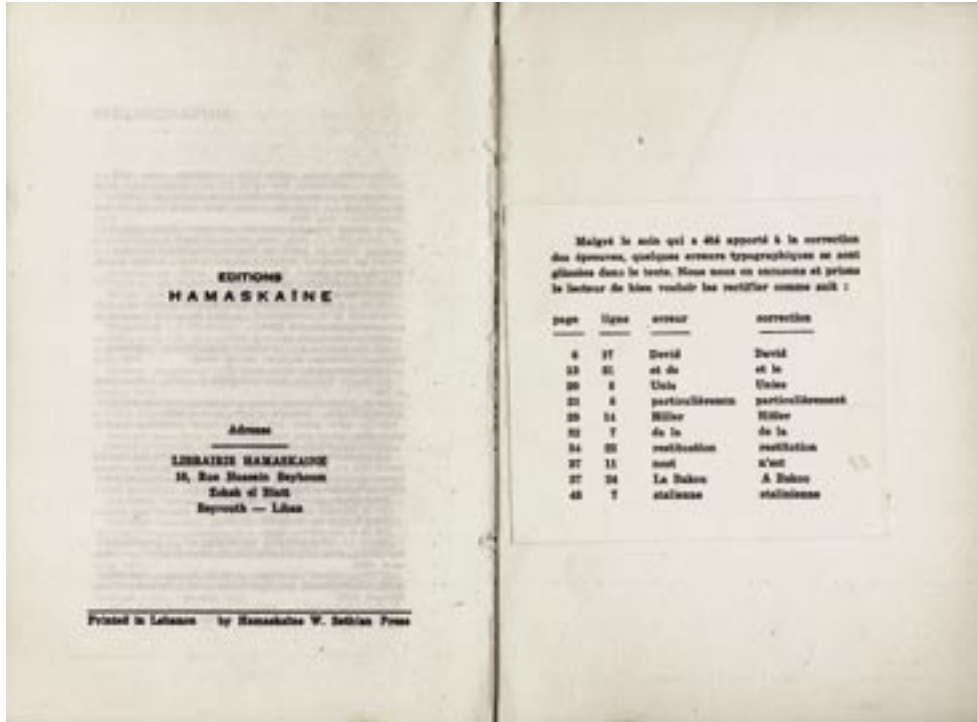
LIFE IS, FROM GUMMO (1997)

2009, stamp, ink on wall, approx. 29 cm x 1,5cm



VISITES A C.B., AFTER WILLIAM ANASTASI, SUBWAY DRAWING (1968)

2008 - 2009, pencil on paper, 2 x 45,2 cm x 42,8 cm



**PRINTED IN LEBANON, LAST PAGE OF LA QUESTION ARMÉNIENNE (1975),
LIBRARY OF M.G.**

2002, book, 28,7cm x 21,5 cm

LES BELGES ET LA LUNE

On n'a jamais connu de race si baroque
Que ces Belges. Dehors le jésu, le charmant
Ils roulent de nos yeux et gorgent soudainement
Tout ce qui rejoint nos coeurs hostels les cloques.
C'est un rois pleurant et leurs œil devent que
Et terre comme l'œil d'un prisonnier en fait faire.
Une fillette touchante: ils éclatent de rire,
Pour faire voir qu'ils ont parfaitement compris.
Comme l'esprit, ils ont en horreur les limites:
Parfois sous la clarté calme du firmament
J'en ai vu, qui rongés d'un bizarre tourment,
Dans l'horreur de la fange et du vomissement,
Et gorgés jusqu'aux dents de genièvre et de bière
Aboyaient à la Lune, assis sur leurs derrières.

pour France Belgique
Charles Baudelaire
LIBRARY
of MICHIGAN ANN ARBOR

LES BELGES ET LA LUNE DE CHARLES BAUDELAIRE (LIBRARY, 2008)

2008, installation, magic marker on wall



SOMETHING ABOUT TODAY

2008, single channel monitor, DVD, 12m25s

words by Octavio Paz, Jorge Luis Borges and from Mozart's Magic Flute

sound by Jean Sibelus

typography by Céline Butaye



M. ET MOI

Céline Butaye and Mekhitar Garabedian

2008, publication, 180 x 217 mm, 80p, colour, soft cover and installation with 20 music stands, 2 monitors, 2 DVDs

M. et moi is a publication, a cahier de brouillon with images coming from both artists' archives. The images form a dialogue, a self-portrait; a collection of unfinished, found, worthless and raw material, a starting point for new works. Having collaborated in the past on each other's pieces, the book will be a look back at future projects, full of possible misunderstandings and lacking in words. An archive of what one remembers at night, just before falling asleep – what the body remembers.

This book is dedicated to the last one.



FOR THE LAST ONE

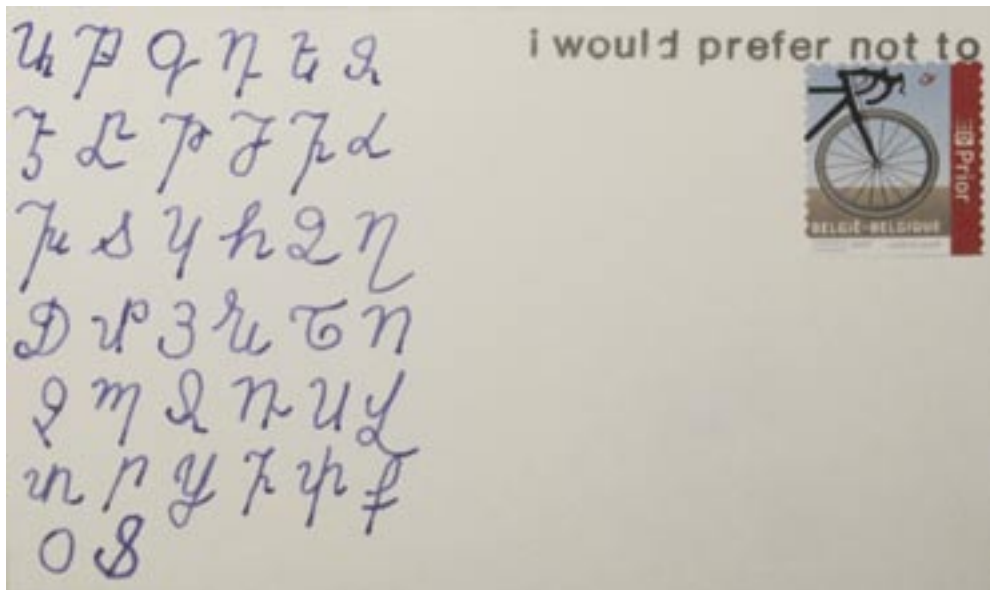
2008, neon sign, 90 x 25 cm



**INTIMACY IS BEING ANGRY AND IT DOESN'T RELATE TO ANYTHING OR ANY-
ONE BECAUSE NO ONE IS INSIDE OF YOU WITH YOUR LANGUAGE TO UNDER-
STAND**

2008, installation of 9 photographs, 7 photographs 67,5 x 101 cm, 2 photographs 67,5 x 90 cm, lamda, diasec
made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

Selection of nine images from the ongoing archive *Intimacy...* made in collaboration with
Céline Butaye. The photographs taken by Céline Butaye over the last nine years all show
Mekhitar Garabedian asleep. The title is from a poem by Susan Cianciolo.



5 POSTCARDS (LIBRARY, 2008)

2008, 5 postcards, 9 x 13,8 cm

made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

5 postcards; distributed anonymously during *Fresh#3*, Buda Art Centre, 2008; or sent by post.



1964 – 1992, ALEP, BOURJ HAMMOUD, FRESNO

2008, 6 photographs, 130 x 25 cm

1954 – 1967, ALEP, BURMANA, FRANKFURT, MICHIGAN, BOURJ HAMMOUD

2008, 7 photographs, 130 x 25 cm

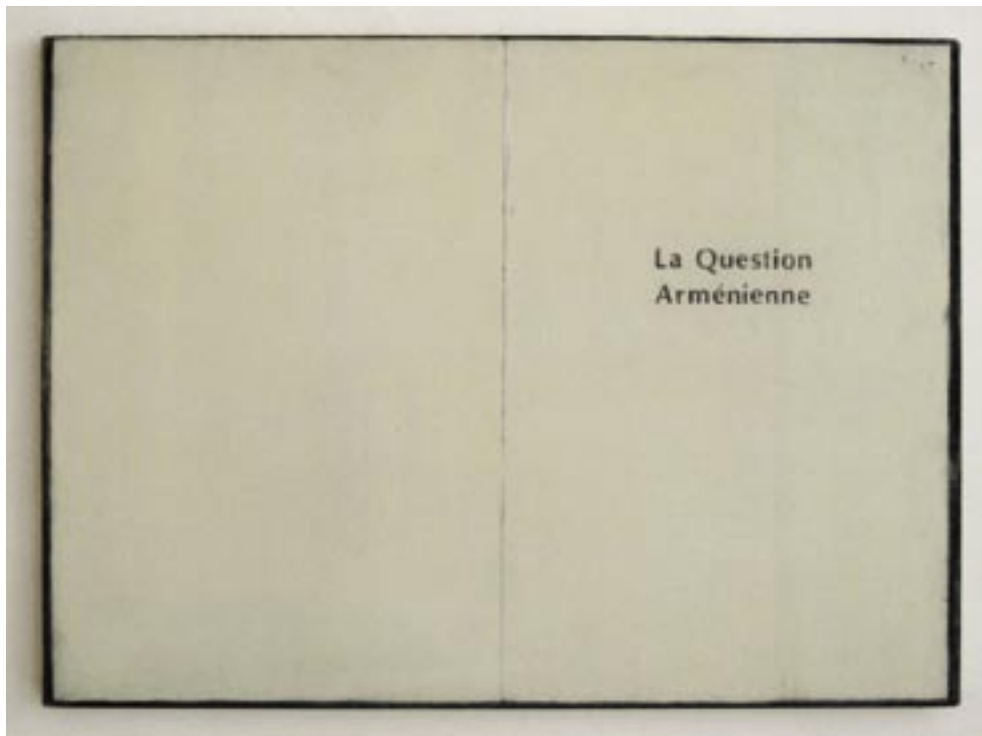
made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

Ongoing collection: the backsides of photographs chosen from the artist's family archive.



ACHEETZ VARTANUH, TZAKHEETZ ISHKHANUH /ON MY RIGHT, VARTAN, ON MY LEFT, ISHKHAN

2008, installation, photograph, 67,5 x 90 cm, lamda, diasec
made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

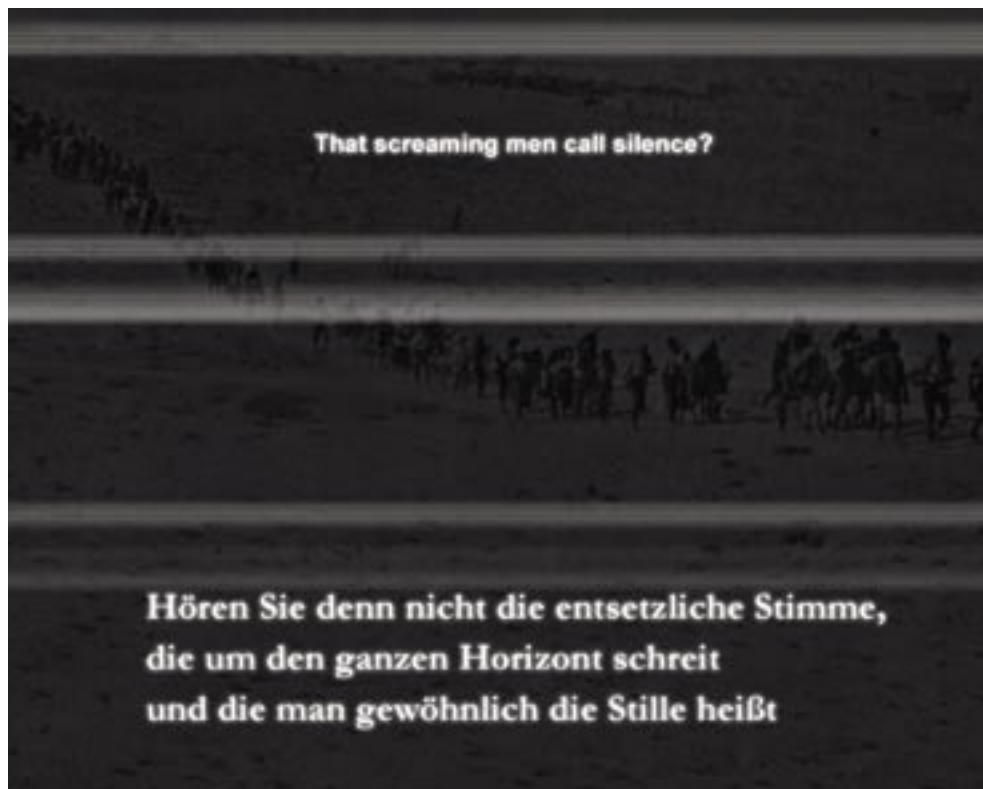


LA QUESTION ARMÉNIENNE

2006 - 2008, oil on canvas

made in collaboration with Céline Butaye

Painting of the title page of a book, published in Lebanon, 1975, at the occasion of a conference
- on the Armenian question - held in Beirut. Part of the installation Library.



HÖREN SIE, DIE STILLE (LIBRARY, 2007)

2007, DVD, 2'54", audio

Don't you hear that horrifying voice that screams across the entire horizon and is usually called silence. This line is taken from Georg Büchner's novel *Lenz*, and is quoted by Werner Herzog at the beginning of his film on Kaspar Hauser *Jeder für sich und got gegen alle*. The image is dark, hard to make out, and shows a collective historical photograph from the marching colonies during the genocide (of the Armenians). The video appears to be broken, while horizontal white lines disturb the image randomly, from time to time.



LIBRARY (LEUVEN, 2007)

2007, installation, printed cards, 6,9 x 9 cm and 9 x 13,8 cm

The usefulness of something unfinished is that it may be taken over or claimed as one's own. Strange unfinishedness is an aesthetic principle.

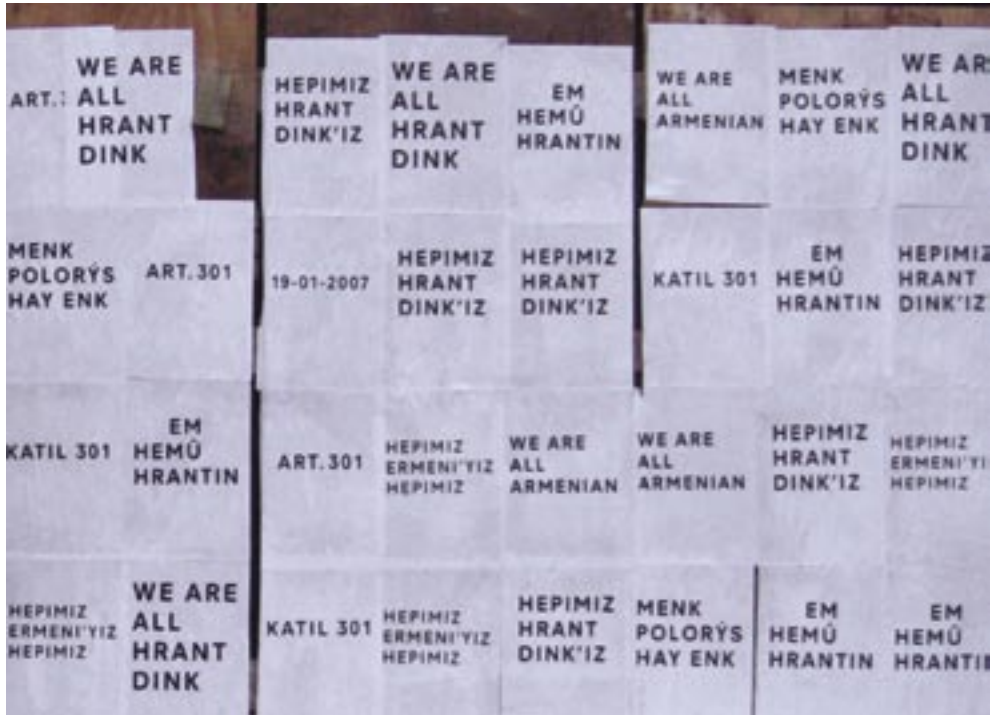
Boris Mikhailov, Unfinished dissertation

Alexandre: "... Ne parler qu'avec les mots des autres, c'est ce que je voudrais. Ce doit être ça la liberté."

Jean Eustache, La maman et la putain

The 'Library' installation is a constant changing display of artefacts, which form the basic elements that determine the artistic actions of Mekhitar Garabedian. These artefacts consist of images, texts, book covers, content pages and other 'found material'.

For this site specific installation fragments of this personal archive are left behind in the books of the tweebonnen library, Leuven, Belgium. It is possible that none of these notes are found (by the visitors of the library), or all of them.



ALL OF US, WE ARE ALL ARMENIAN

2007, installation, posters, A2

On the day of the funeral of Hrant Dink, the Turkish journalist from Armenian origin who was murdered by a young Turkish nationalist, there was a massive demonstration in Istanbul. During this demonstration people were carrying signs which said, in Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian (written phonetically in Western letters) and English: We are all Armenian, We are all Hrant Dink and Art. 301, Katil 301.



TASS, JULY – AUGUST 2007, T1-T40

2007, installation, coffee, 40 cups, 17 plateaus with text, audio (1 cd)

During the summer of 2007 every other day I had my fortune read by my mother, who has a habit of reading her fortune in a cup of (strong Middle-Eastern) coffee, after drinking the coffee. The texts of the 40 predictions were written in Armenian on 17 trays and also recorded as audio. The actual cups with the coffee were varnished, preserving the coincidental and otherwise temporary 'image' which appears and in which one reads the future.



THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME BE MYSELF AGAIN

2007, L.E.D. sign, 73 x 12 cm

I want to thank you for letting me be myself, again.

Sly and the family Stone, 1970 (Library of Mekhitar Garabedian, 2007)



MG TROSHAG – MG FLAG

2007, installation, flag, 2 x 3 m



EVEN IN YOUR MADNESS I LOVE YOU – CEDAR LIBANI (NOMADIC TREE)

2007, installation, cedar libani, mobile case with handwritten text, 9 x 1.5 x 3 m

how could I help but by loving you / even in your madness I love you / because your love gathers us together (Fairuz)

Fairuz, the most popular of Lebanese singers, was to have performed at this year's Baalbek festival, cancelled now like all Lebanon's festivals of music, dance, theatre and painting.

(Robert Fisk, *the Independent*, 19-07-2006)

When it comes to surpassing disasters, the damage is never only the material one, but, especially in past eras, the withdrawal of spiritual guides and allies, and of divinities. (Jalal Toufic, *Forthcoming*)

You have seen nothing in Beirut. For this installation a cedar Libani, placed in a mobile case, will become a nomadic tree; the first stop is the square of the library in Leuven. – The tree is nine meters high. Featured on the country's flag, the cedar is Lebanon's national symbol. The massive protests after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri (14-02-2005) were called the cedar revolution. The installation can be read as a representation of the insane attachment of Lebanese in exile, of all humans living in exile, and their complex relation to the mother-country/fatherland.

The cedar libani is a question by a stranger. The concept of the stranger has always been the one arriving with questions, posing questions, making one pose questions and thus challenging the order. Derrida teaches us how to answer with hospitality. The concept of hospitality is full of internal contradictions: the guest as friend or enemy, the creation of borders as a condition for the possibility of a concept and experience aimed at crossing borders, 'being possible only on the condition of its impossibility'. 'The real challenge posed by the other', Honig states, 'is not whether or how to convert, tolerate, protect, or reject those who are not the same, but how to deal with difference, with those who resist categorization as same or other.' (Derrida J., *De l'hospitalité* – Honig, B., *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*)

The cedar/nomadic tree challenges local hospitality not only environmentally (and logistically), also as a question, as an embodied idea.



MAKE NO MISTAKE, YOU SAID STAY, SO WE STAYED

2006, video projection, DVD, 21'19"

with Vergine Karaguezian, music by Aram Manoogian, *Morgenröte* (2006)

'Half hours on earth, what are they worth? I don't know'

Silver Jews, *Trains across the sea* (Starlite Walker, 1994)

The video shows a woman who is trying not to cry. She's sitting in her bedroom, watching television; her favourite daily soap-opera. After a while she can no longer fight her tears. To this intimate scene the sounds bring in the outside. What we can hear was recorded from the window of the actual room that we are watching; sounds that come and go; of cheers during a soccer game, the rain and wind.



PORTRAIT AS/BY C.B.

2006, photograph and text

photography by Céline Butaye

Portrait as/by C.B. is part of Library of Mekhitar Garabedian (2002-ongoing) The image is a portrait of the artist as Charles Baudelaire, photographed by Céline Butaye. This image is combined with a handwritten text bringing together four quotes from the Stooges, Edgar Allan Poe, Adonis and Susan Cianciolo.



YERKARAN (SONG BOOK) 1890 - 1923

2006, installation of 250 books, publication, 8 x 12 cm, semi-hardcover, 224p.

graphic art by Céline Butaye

Yerkaran contains a collection of 25 Armenian national and revolutionary songs. The songs tell of the exploits of the fedayee commanders, the heroes of the Armenian revolutionary struggle. They describe the past ordeals and triumphs of the Armenian people. English, Armenian, phonetic and musical notations of all the songs are mixed with images of the celebrated fedayees. The size and design are small and copy that of an 'Aghotakeerk'; a book of prayers that Armenians traditionally keep under the mattress of their bed. We believe this will protect us while we sleep. The small size also reminds of other Christian psalm or prayer books. 250 of these books were presented as an installation in a Catholic baroque church, the St-Michielskerk in Leuven, Belgium. Part of the installation was a security system, which caught the visitors who were tempted to steal one of the books. Of course many were caught stealing.



I WOULD PREFER NOT TO, NEON #1

2006, neon sign, 1 m 50 cm x 11 cm

The sentence refers to Herman Melville's (1819-1891) short story *Bartleby, the Scrivener. A story of Wall Street* (1853). 'It often appears very difficult not to go with the flow. Neither do we get thanked for this individuality. Even so, in my mind it is more important to realize our own wishes and desires and not always look over our shoulder to see if we are not, after all, out of step. I call on everyone to say, as Bartleby in Herman Melville's story of the same name says, 'I would prefer not to', when we are asked to do something that really has no point, even if one is being urged to do it through group pressure. This awareness is a powerful weapon, and one can, as it were, back away from general expectations, from the general wishes of society, to concentrate totally on one's own wishes and expectations.'

(Hagop Hagopian, *Les Belges et la lune*, essay published in *Happy when it rains*, Mekhitar Garabedian, Toohcsmi uitgevers, 2006)



INTRODUCTION MG

2006, light box, 90 x 90 cm

This light box shows a handwritten note of a text by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. The text is a Dutch translation of this quote from *A Lecture on Ethics* (17-11-1927, Cambridge), in which the words Engels (English) is changed by Nederlands (Dutch). Wittgenstein apologises for his knowledge of the English language. And so does the artist for his knowledge of Dutch. The note is signed by the artist and considered as an introduction to his oeuvre.



PARARAN (DICTIONARY)

2006, sound installation with 38 speakers, 85 x 57 x 46 cm, 38 cds, total time 455'

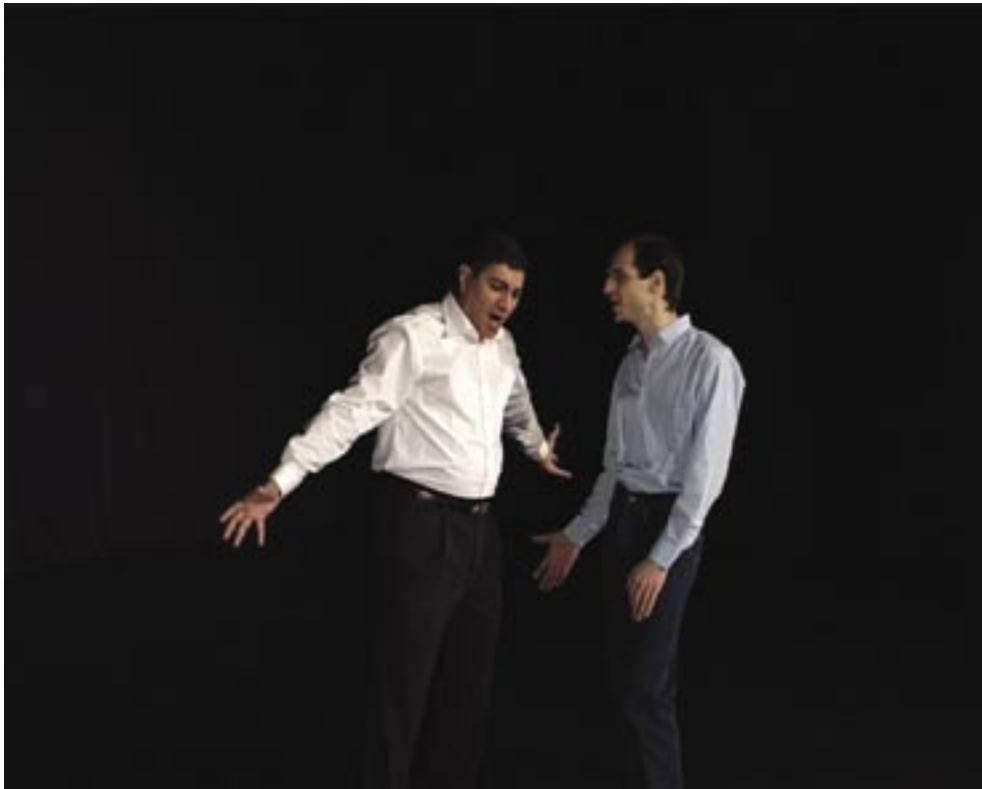
voices by Emmanuel Kouyoumdjian, Dikran Mouradian, Agheg Garabedian and Vergine Karaguezian

Upholding one's identity in a cultural and social climate with no means to communicate, with no common language, is an almost impossible process.

This major sound installation 'Pararan (Dictionary)' is a representation of how one gets completely disorientated and frustrated when acting in a context without the possibility to understand. Wandering throughout a space where 38 vast sound speakers are producing a constant flow of incomprehensible words is not a pleasant experience.

Millions of people are confronted every day with this kind of unnatural habitat.

This constant flow of incomprehensible sounds is specifically the whole Armenian language, 38 letters, thousands of words, one after another, and is a basic part of the cultural heritage of the artist.



LEARNING PIECE: BE PATIENT, MY SOUL

2006, video projection, DVD, 14'39"

with Tigran Atanesian and Mekhitar Garabedian

In 1970, the American artist Vito Acconci performs *Learning Piece* at the Wadsworth Atheneum. In this performance Acconci plays a tape of Leadbelly's *Black Betty*, repeats the first two phrases and sings along with them until he gets the feel of Leadbelly's performance. Adding two phrases at a time he learns the entire song.

In this retake by Mekhitar Garabedian, an older Armenian man teaches the young artist an old Armenian revolutionary song. The older man does not only teach him the verses of the song, he also performs with passion the revolutionary spirit of the song. The young artist does not only learn the words, also a part of a vanishing cultural heritage has been passed on. At the end, he performs with similar passion, identifying himself with the content.



L'ÉTRANGER

2006, video projection, DVD, 4'25"

with Jos Verbist and Ben Benaouisse, text by Charles Baudelaire, *Le Spleen de Paris*, 1869

The work "L'Étranger" is an adaptation of a "petit poème en prose" by Charles Baudelaire by the same name. This short piece of prose composed as a poem was published for the first time in 1869 and tells the story of a nihilistic man, who has given up all his connections. He has no connections anymore with his relatives and seems to have no memories or desires. He has no more patriotic or financial ties and has removed himself from God and beauty. This individual has broken completely with his past and also with the present. He doesn't belong anywhere anymore. The position of Baudelaire's stranger is a unique and absolute position, which is unachievable. With this video, Mekhitar Garabedian reflects on the position of the immigrant/stranger. Each immigrant carries his memory, identity and history as an unavoidable dilemma.



MG

2006, video projection, DVD, 2'05"

A foreigner's exile; spelling one's name. (J. Toufic, *Distracted*, 2003).

Many migrants are forced to change their name because of the incapacity of the native inhabitants to pronounce their authentic names. Referring to a scene of François Truffaut's film *Baisers Volés* (1968), Mekhitar Garabedian finds himself in front of a mirror, pronouncing his name in a Dutch manner alternating with the pronunciation of his name in Armenian. In this work, the artist evokes a split identity, a doubt about his real position. At the same time he claims this split identity to identify himself.



HAPPY WHEN IT RAINS (SELF-PORTRAIT)

2002-2004, installation 6 photographs, 145 cm x 145 cm

The landscapes are identical in the way that they show us locations in nature represented as obstructive, as impenetrable. They are non-locations. They are not easily accessible and hardly anyone would like to go there.

Happy when it rains is a photographic translation of concepts like Diaspora, obstruction and neglect. The images refer in a symbolic way to a mental state, a position of existence without identity, superfluous and disorientating.

As in many of his works, Mekhitar Garabedian questions his own position and identity. He remains critical towards his own presence/absence in an Armenian culture he witnessed at home and towards his role in the traditions of a West-European country like Belgium, where he grew up as a second generation migrant. One can often describe this position as a non-location, a state of mind that only exists by continuously questioning the context.



BEIRUT 1963/BEYROUTH 1963

2003, video projection, DVD, 2'14"

voices by garabedian family

This video is based on a family portrait of the artist. A family is seated in a sofa in front of the camera. The image goes through a whole process of transformation; departing from a wrinkled image, becoming an intact, undamaged picture, to end again with the original historical image. The damage and the wrinkles to the original image represent the past, the transformation to and from the perfect image is only physical, the content remains. All members of the family remain identical and also the impact of the Genocide and Diaspora, present in the intimate family photo and in the history of the Armenian people. The wrinkles disappear and return, uniting past and present. But they are simultaneously representing a naïve need for an authentic and sound state of mind. The soundtrack is happy birthday to you, performed in 5 different languages: Armenian, Arabic, French, Dutch and English. The so-called joviality of this song is in deep contrast with the tragic destiny of this family, part of a much larger community.



M.VERDONCKLAAN

2003, video projection, DVD, 8'40"

with Vergine Karaguezian, sound by Kwinten Callens

This digital movie is made up of one shot, and shows us a woman looking at a pile of photographs. We can only observe her hands and the photographs. At the complete end of the film, you can very briefly see her face. The images are selected from the family archive of the artist and they are typical snapshots: images from Syria, Lebanon and also from Belgium.

Which stories do these images tell of someone's life, which moments do they represent, and which are left out? "Not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory, but it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory. One day, some friends were talking about their childhood memories; they had any number; but I who had just been looking at my old photographs, had none left." (Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida/La Chambre Claire*, 1980). These photographs don't seem to show any turmoil, ruptures,... fears. Like all family photo-albums they were collected to represent a homogenous, chronological, official and legitimate history of the family, free of any threatening or disturbing elements.



LIBRARY

2002-ongoing, mixed media, dimensions variable

The installation 'Library' is a constant changing display of artefacts, which form the basic elements that determine the artistic actions of Mekhitar Garabedian. These artefacts consist of images, texts, books, book covers, content pages and other 'found material'.



GENTBRUGGE 1998 - 2003

2003, installation, 9 photographs, 50 x 40 cm



AGHEG

2003, sound installation, 9'

voice by Agheg Garabedian

In order to create this sound installation, the artist asked his father to recall as many names as possible of people he met in the different countries he has lived up till now. Most of these names are unfamiliar in sound and identity because they are based on language and name structures from the Middle East. As a visitor, you are confronted with an environment from which you are excluded, as well on the level of understanding, as on the level of the intimate, personal world of the father. The succession of the names goes very fluently in the beginning, but increasingly, the intervals between two names become larger and larger. The silence represents the search throughout memory, and as time passes, there is a growing equilibrium between forgetting and remembering. Departing from this very personal position, Mekhitar Garabedian creates a poetic translation of the key elements he is developing in his work. This sound installation shows what some of the consequences are of migration, how language(s) mutate(s) within a Diaspora and how memories form a direct link with the past and at the same time how they block a path to complete assimilation.

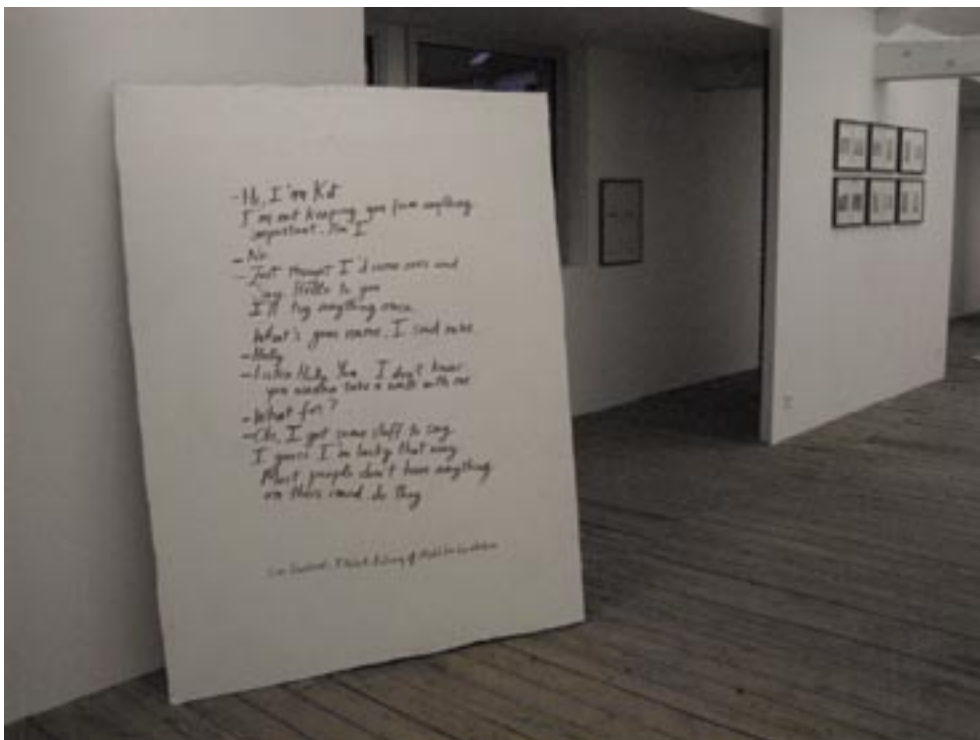
MEKHITAR GARABEDIAN

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some exhibition views



exhibition view, *The End, Again*, hoet bekaert gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 2010
fig. a, a comme alphabet, kork (carpet) (foreground)



exhibition view, *The End, Again*, hoet bekaert gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 2010
Hi, I'm Kit, from *Badlands* (1973) (foreground)



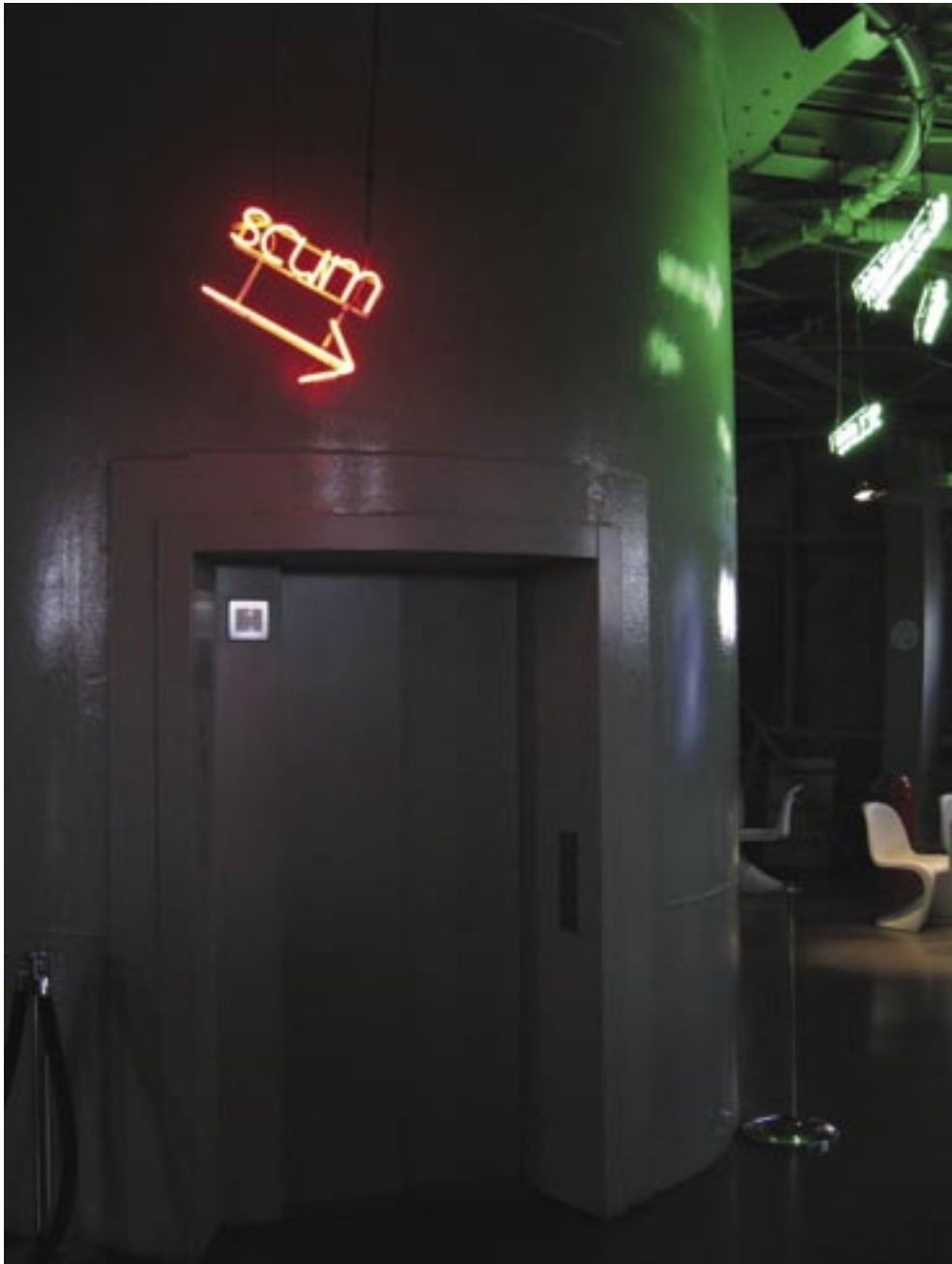
exhibition view, *The End, Again*, hoet bekaert gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 2010
fig. a, a comme alphabet



exhibition view, *The End, Again*, hoet bekaert gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 2010
Tù, que me lees, ¿estás seguro de entender mi lenguaje?



exhibition view, *The End, Again*, hoet bekaert gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 2010
Mesrob, T-shirt



exhibition view, *be.welcome*, Atomium, Brussels, Belgium 2010
We are all foreign scum



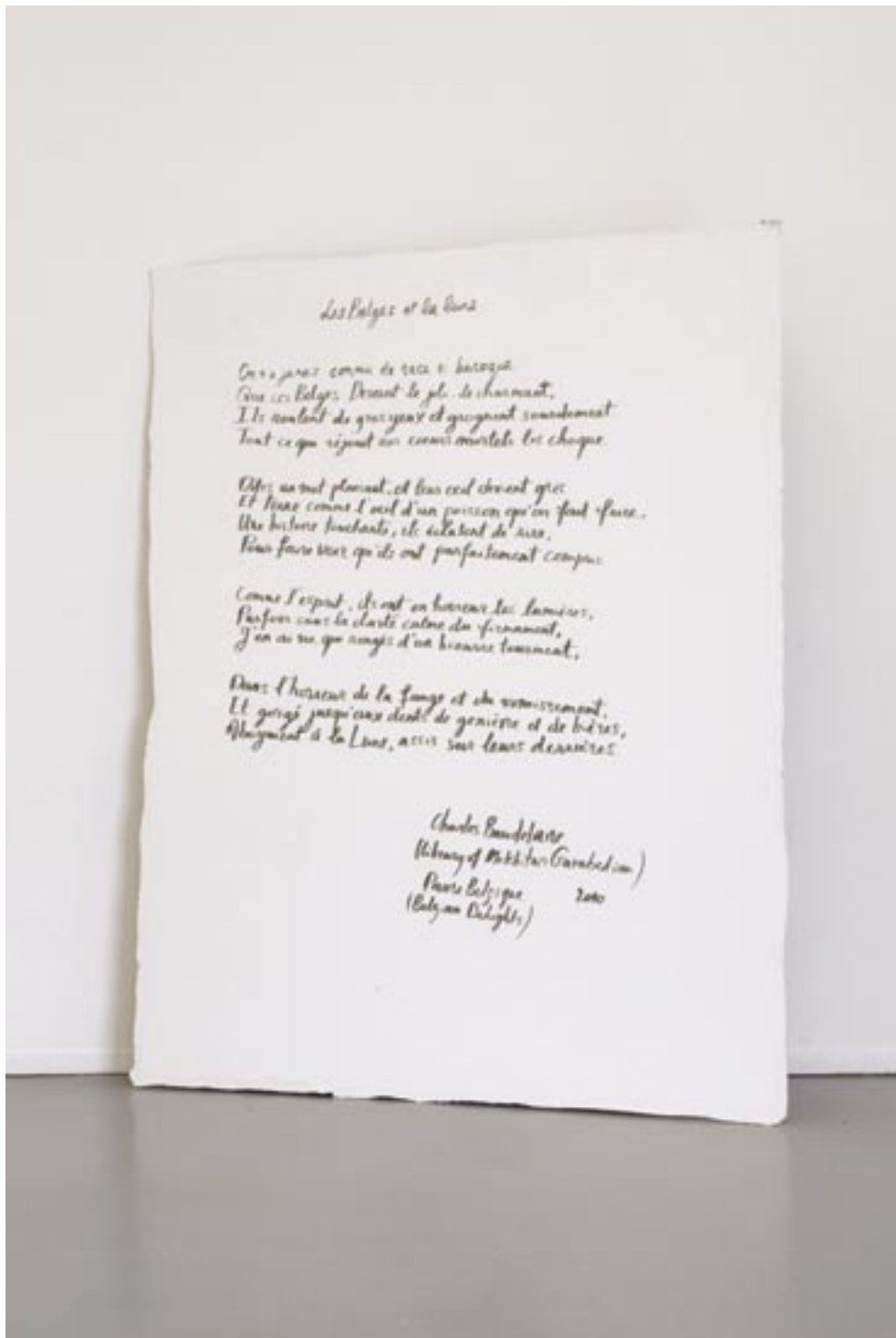
exhibition view, *be.welcome*, Atomium, Brussels, Belgium 2010
We are all foreign scum



exhibition view, *be.welcome*, Atomium, Brussels, Belgium 2010
We are all foreign scum



exhibition view, *Changez! A Belgian Show*, 21 Rozendaal, Enschede, the Netherlands, 2010
Visites à C.B., after William Anastasi, Subway Drawing (1968)



Les Belges et la lune

Ces pays comme de race à baroque
Sont les Belges, devant de plus de charmeant,
Ils ont le goût de leur pays et gagnent soudainement
Tout ce qui revient sur leurs monts et les champs.

On ne voit plus, et leur ciel est gris
Et leur pays est d'un pays qui est fait de France.
Une histoire touchante, ils ont le goût de leur pays,
Pour faire voir qu'ils ont parfaitement compris.

Comme l'esprit, ils ont en leur pays les lumières,
Parfois dans la clarté calme des instruments,
J'en ai vu qui ont d'un bon sens lumineux,

Dans l'horreur de la fange et du vomissement,
Et regardé jusqu'aux dents de génie et de bêtise,
Allegement à la Lune, avec sur leurs derrières.

Charles Baudelaire
(Library of the University of Cambridge)
Paris Belgique 2010
(Belgian Delights)

exhibition view, *Changez! A Belgian Show*, 21 Rozendaal, Enschede, the Netherlands, 2010
Les Belges et la lune de Charles Baudelaire, 2010



exhibition view, *Uit het geheugen*, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent, Belgium, 2009 - 2010
Pages 1-14, Yerkan (Songbook) 1890 – 1923 (detail)



exhibition view, *Uit het geheugen*, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent, Belgium, 2009 - 2010
Pages 1-14, Yerkan (Songbook) 1890 – 1923



exhibition view, *Young Man Blues*, KIOSK, Ghent, Belgium 2010
feels good to be Jesse on the inside today



exhibition view, *The Biennale Knokke*, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Knokke, Belgium, 2009
feels good to be Jesse on the inside today



GEMAK, Den Haag, the Netherlands, 2008
Beirut/Beyrouth 1963



Happy when it rains, Be-part, platform for contemporary art, Waregem, Belgium, 2006
Library, 2002 - ongoing



Gasthoven 07 | ZONEVREEMD, cc Het Gasthuis, Aarschot, Belgium, 2007
Tass, July - Aug 2007, T1 -T40



Mankind, story of a wound, SMAK and CRKC, Leuven and Heverlee, Belgium, 2007
Yerkaran, Song book 1980 - 1923



Mankind, story of a wound, SMAK and CRKC, Leuven and Heverlee, Belgium, 2006
I would prefer not to, neon #1



Open, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, 2007
Tass, July - Aug 2007, T1 -T40



Takaaki Izumi – Mekhitar Garabedian, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent, Belgium, 2008
Happy when it rains (Self portrait)



Fortis Young Ones Award, LineArt, the Art Fair, Ghent, Belgium, 2006
I would prefer not to, neon #1, L'Étranger, Time's Tide (Ghent, 2006)



ArtBrussels, Belgium, 2008
Intimacy is being angry and it doesn't relate to anything or anyone because no one is inside of you with your language to understand



Collection Presentation, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium, 2008
Pararan (Dictionary)



Collection Presentation, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium, 2008
Pararan (Dictionary)



Silent Revolutions, Chancart - Bibliotheek Tweebronnen, Leuven, Belgium, 2007
Even in your madness I love you - cedar libani (nomadic tree)

MEKHITAR GARABEDIAN

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interview

ELLE

... Écoute-moi.

Comme toi, je connais l'oubli.

LUI

Non, tu ne connais pas l'oubli.

ELLE

Comme toi, je suis douée de mémoire.

Je connais l'oubli.

LUI

Non, tu n'es pas douée de mémoire.

Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, Éditions Gallimard, 1960, p31-32

INTERVIEW: Kurt Vanbelleghem – Mekhitar Garabedian

Several of your works are based on highly personal references in which your position as an immigrant clearly plays a central role. How did you actually land up in Belgium?

My father was born in Haleb in Syria and my mother in Beirut in Lebanon. They grew up in the Armenian communities of Haleb and Beirut. The suburb of Bourj Hammoud in Beirut is also known as Little Armenia. My grandparents emigrated to both countries respectively in 1915 when they fled the Turkish atrocities. Throughout the Middle East you see Armenian communities living with their language and their religion in the midst of various Muslim communities. Through the civil war in Lebanon and the resulting instability in the Middle East, my parents finally emigrated to Europe and they found themselves in Belgium more by chance than anything else.

Armenian history and culture still have a huge impact on your lives even though you are separated from it by two generations.

I was brought up according to the Armenian orthodox tradition of my parents. ...Armenians, and you see this all over the world, are very conscious of the possibility of disappearance of their own people, their history, language, culture, etc. This feeling is strengthened further by the fact that the world seems to have forgotten our history. Armenians instil this as it were in their children. "You must not forget this. This is what happened. This is your language. This is our history."

Of course in Belgium you encounter quite a different system, with other customs and a language not your own. You went to school here. What impact did these two worlds have on your education and your personality?

Well, it already starts with your name; it is pronounced differently in the two worlds. When you are growing up you adapt; you don't create another personality but you become divided, as it were. There is a constant movement back and forth.

This duality also plays a central role in your artistic activities.

You find the most direct translation of this back and forth movement in the work entitled MG. I stand in front of a mirror and pronounce my name alternately in Armenian and Dutch. I look at

myself and constantly move from one context to the other. A name acts as a signifier, it contains who you are for other people, it represents your identity.

You base your own interpretation of the concept of identity on a highly personal situation. You refer to your own family history and you also use this explicitly.

In the M.Verdoncklaan video I show someone looking at family photos, but these family photos function on a more abstract level. Everyone has a pile of these family photos lying somewhere at home, but it is about what is missing when you watch how someone looks through a pack of photos like these. These photos show a history, our history, but if you look at the images you see nothing of the history we have experienced. You don't see the ruins of buildings in Beirut even though they are there and we lived there. What interests me is precisely what has disappeared and how you show that something is disappearing. When watching this video one is constantly wondering whether we can learn anything from it, what we can find out about this family, but in fact...

The 'Beirut/Beyrouth 1963' video has a similar starting point.

In this video I literally show the disappearing. The image, a very traditional family portrait which appears in its original, crumpled state and becomes an image in perfect condition, that is technically speaking contemporary. I then show what can no longer be seen. What also interests me in this process is how memory works, the way memory grows analytically, but its deterioration occurs erratically and does not appear to be subject to any rules.

Several of the works you have made so far are self-referential. Though one is not immediately aware of this, as in the series of photographs entitled 'Happy when it rains'. Do these photos reflect your own position?

They act as self-portraits. They are about a feeling of not belonging anywhere, or of being somewhere in between, between two different positions. Being unable to take root, to flourish. Even though you learn to speak the new language perfectly and you master it, even though you do not hear a single melody to remind you of your origins, you are constantly reminded that you are different. Every time I introduce myself, 'I am Mekhitar Garabedian', I also continue to belong to this other world. This experience is both positive and negative. Consequently, my Armenian origins will certainly continue to be a starting point, but not just defined by a context of migration. It is also about realising that you are – as a second or in fact as a third generation migrant, if you look at it from an Armenian perspective – responsible for the disappearance of a history, a culture and a language. How does one deal with this fact? This is something I often translate into my work. I feel like a vampire looking in a mirror, and there is no reflection, you see nothing, and yet you are there, you are looking into the mirror.

The video work entitled Learning Piece: Be patient, my soul shows this double attitude inherent in my own position. On the one hand it is a retake of an earlier performance by the American artist Vito Acconci. It is a work from 1970 in which Acconci teaches himself a song on stage. Using a tape recorder he repeats a couple of stanzas over and over. He keeps on doing this until he has learned the whole song perfectly. In a certain sense I have appropriated that work. On the other hand, Learning Piece: Be patient, my soul also expresses my responsibility with regard to Armenian history. In the remake of Acconci's performance I am on stage with another man, an older Armenian who is passionately teaching me an old Armenian revolutionary song. It is about the genocide and it is the old man's sacred task not only to teach me this song but to also make me aware of this history. He demands that I become engrossed in it, in the absolute belief that in this way we will keep these facts alive and that we will survive. One could almost

describe his motive as fear; “look, we have a young Armenian who does not know this song, who does not embrace his own history.” What particularly interests me in this learning process is what both Augustine and Wittgenstein refer to, namely that learning a language is not a form of instruction but of training, a conditioning.

Another important element in your work as a whole is the concept of language. It almost seems as if you are conducting some kind of research into the position of language in migration. Language includes and excludes, language is a home and a hostile environment.

This definitely has to do with the experience of growing up in two languages, Armenian and Dutch. In addition to this my parents used a third, Arabic, as a secret language. When we, the children, weren't supposed to hear something they would switch to Arabic. Of course this immediately creates an atmosphere of inclusion and exclusion. If you wish to stigmatise someone as a stranger then you simply have to speak a language he does not understand in his presence and you heighten the feeling that he is undesirable to an incredible degree.

In this sense the sound installation, ‘Pararan (Dictionary)’ has an alienating effect. You are engulfed in a torrent of words from 38 loudspeakers, but it feels very unpleasant to walk in a space filled with language you don't understand at all and where there is nothing you can get a hold on.

I am very interested in the position of the foreigner-translator. As a foreigner you are constantly forced to translate. You find yourself in a position in which you can no longer speak of a mother tongue; neither Armenian nor Dutch suffices as you are in fact constantly translating. The position of the foreigner-translator interests me in a poetical, literary sense but I am also drawn to its socio-political aspect. An immigrant is supposed to assimilate both in his home and in a broader social context. He should abandon his own language, but I see this as having an added value. The foreigner's accent is a strength, it is precisely this that distinguishes him, not just his appearance but his melody. In Pararan (Dictionary) you get an inverse process. Here the non-ethnic person feels like a stranger, he experiences the same as a migrant who lands up in a totally alien language structure and has to orientate himself in it. This appears to be a difficult and nerve-racking experience. When meeting and receiving the foreigner, his discourse, and his strange language the non-ethnic person feels very uncomfortable. Personally, I find listening to a language I do not understand a special, enriching experience.

It is the fate of the foreigner to experience a break. He has left something behind him permanently. He does not choose this break; it is often the result of actions which are forced upon him and he must adapt accordingly. Through the process of migration there is inevitably a break with the traditions of your original environment, with your language and with your history. This gives rise to a great many questions: forgetting, losing, shifting, betraying, evaporation, erosion – of identity, language, family, culture and history. The extinguishing of tradition. The disappearance of an image. Exile reduces the old body, the old language, to a corpse. What is language, what is speech, when the language and the voices that feed it are being extinguished? What is the image that remains of the country that has been left behind after living an entire life in a new country? Then there is a new context, a new history; what effect does this have? Is this a new history? What happens to the old? I find dealing with the break and its translation into language highly intriguing. It is about living in sounds and associations that have no ties with what the body remembers at night.

I speak Dutch to my brother. The second generation migrants speak Dutch to one another. I do not address my brother in my mother tongue, but in a foreign language. The absence of a

language; I speak Dutch out of habit. Switching languages is the same as losing, betrayal... of the language of the country, the language of the group, the mother tongue. On the basis of this fracture, the old and the new, the original family and the new community appear to be as attractive as they are problemmatic: there is no end to the questions and the unrest cannot be quelled.

The Pararan (Dictionary) sound installation is partly the translation of something my mother used to say: "To hear our language is a joy for us". The linguistic nature of man is that he names things. Naming things and events (speaking) in Armenian is a joy. Like Elstir, a character in Proust who recreates things by taking away their name and giving them a new name, Armenian recreates reality. Dutch does not have the lexical ambivalences or the multiple, often indeterminate meanings of the Armenian idiom, which is insufficiently familiar with Cartesian notions and in which the prayer of the heart vibrates together with the darkness of the senses. Visually, Armenian also means a different representation of reality (through language); it has its own alphabet with thirty-eight letters. This is not me. This is my mother memory, that warm corpse that still speaks, a body within my body.

Through your work you often place yourself in a position that could be described as a non-location; the place in which you find yourself can only be defined on the basis of an external questioning. Is this also how you approach the presentation of your work?

I often present my work in ensembles. In a previous exhibition I presented the Agheg sound installation and the Beirut/Beyrouth 1963 video as the central works, and two other works, the series of photos entitled Happy when it rains (self-portrait) and the video M.Verdoncklaan acted as a sort of commentary. The one work questions the other. The choices I make here depend on the type of presentation. There are times when these choices are reversed. The works refer to one another – not only visually but also intellectually.

This non-location, the absence of a clear starting point, also makes up the substance of the video work L'étranger, in which you place a person in a completely nihilistic situation in which he does not wish to retain a single reference.

Man sometimes asks the animal: why don't you tell me about your happiness; why do you just stare at me? The animal wants to answer and says: it is because I always immediately forget what I wanted to say - but then it forgot this answer too and was silent: and this surprised man. However he was surprised at himself: that he could not learn to forget and consequently always remained attached to the past: no matter how far or how fast he walks he always carries the chain with him. It is a miracle: the moment, which appears in a flash and passes in a flash, and before which there is nothing and after which there is nothing, nevertheless returns like a ghost and upsets the tranquillity of another moment. A sheet from the scroll of time constantly detaches itself and flutters away – and then suddenly flutters back into man's lap. Then man says 'I remember' and envies the animal who immediately forgets and actually sees each moment die, disappearing into mist and darkness and being extinguished for ever.

L'Étranger is a 'petit poème en prose' of the same title by Baudelaire in which a man admits to no longer having any ties, no memory, no desires, but it is impossible to take grasp this state of being. What is past is never past, but a ghost; it continues to return and disturb the fullness and peace of the present. Consequently, man is not just what he is, but is marked by what he no longer is. What typifies human life is that it turns back on itself; it must come back because man is pursued by his 'having been'.