

The Silent Echo - Contemporary Art Exhibition in Baalbeck

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Archaeological site museum of Baalbek, Baalbek Temple, Baalbek, Lebanon

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The Silent Echo

Archaeological site museum of Baalbek

17 September –17 October 2016

Open 8 am–7pm daily

Artists:

Ai Weiwei, Ziad Antar, Danica Dakic, Laurent Grasso, Susan Hiller, Theo Mercier,  
Marwan Rechmaoui, Paola Yacoub, Cynthia Zaven

Studiocur/art is pleased to announce The Silent Echo, an exhibition opening September, 17th 2016 at the Archaeological site Museum of Baalbek-Lebanon. Curated by Karina El Helou and co-organised with Diane Abela.

For the first time, the UNESCO world heritage site of Baalbek will host a contemporary art exhibition in its museum and the Temple of Bacchus. Composed of a triad of temples (Jupiter, Venus and Bacchus), the site dates back to 27BC and is located 90km from Beirut, Lebanon. Historically known as Heliopolis during the Hellenistic period, it is considered to be one of the most important Roman sites in the Middle East.

The exhibition sheds light on the importance of on-site Museums and explores in the context of Baalbek, how monuments and artifacts become symbols of an obsolete past, subject to destruction during war and victims of iconoclasm. The erosion of objects also caused by longterm exposure to atmospheric factors raises issues of preservation, ethics, and questions about how best to keep the vestiges of the past existent.

The silent archaeological findings are echoes of a lost time, while contemporary artworks echo the archaeology displayed in the Museum.

Foundation by Ai Weiwei invites the public to sit on the bases of a Chinese traditional house demolished as a result of urban expansion, thus establishing a forum to discuss how to build a harmonious future over the ruins of the past. Marwan Rechmaoui explores the notion of future archaeology through fictional landscapes and crumbled architectures, monuments of war or erosion of time; the surviving structures ultimately become time capsules. Perpetuum Mobile by Cynthia Zaven, sponsored by Baalbeck International Festival, is a multi-channel sound installation on the passage of time. Ziad Antar's concrete sculptures, displayed in the gallery of the cities of the dead, reference the

transitional state of public sculptures when being restored and show a state of in-between. Soleil Noir film by Laurent Grasso invites viewers to journey through the apocalyptic Roman ruins after the eruptions of volcanos in Pompei and Stromboli.

Theo Mercier displays experimental archaeology through an installation of sculptures in polystyrene which he placed in a grotto for two years, thus forming a layer of calcareous. Paola Yacoub's research on the different strata of Beirut excavations in the 1990's show the complexity and multiple layered nature of historical account.

Susan Hiller breaks the silence of the dead with recordings of extinct or endangered languages in The Last Silent Movie to preserve immaterial heritage. Danica Dakic staged photographs of migrants without documents to reference the loss of identity on the background of Hubert Robert's painting of the Louvre's La Grande Galerie, imagined in ruins.

Parallel program:

19 September 2016:

STUDIOCUR/ART in partnership with UNESCO will hold a conference on Archaeology, Obsolete past and Iconoclasm, at SURSOCK MUSEUM with the following speakers: Marc-Olivier Whaler, Luc Bachelot, Margarete Van Ess, Elena Sorokina, Karina El Helou, Nigel Tallis, Assaad Seif and Philippe Charlier.

15 October 2016:

STUDIOCUR/ART invited the non-profit organisation APEAL to organise an outreach program with the local community of Baalbek in collaboration with Zoukak contemporary theatre company sponsored by Robert. A Matta. The outcome of the 10 workshops will be a performance held at the Temple of Bacchus on October 15. The Embassy of Switzerland will support a film by Roy Dib on this encounter between contemporary theater and Baalbek.

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Hospitality Partners: Hotel Palmyra, Smallville Hotel, Mymouné,

Space layout: Antoine Maalouf Architects

For more information: [www.studiocurart.com](http://www.studiocurart.com)

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