

Jayce Salloum **Récits alternatifs** (du Liban à l'Afghanistan, par la Vallée de l'Okanagan...)

curator : Catherine Bédard

vernissage, Wednesday, November 23, 2011,
6–8:30 p.m. (last admission at 8 p.m.)

exhibition, November 24, 2011–March 16, 2012
presented in the occasion of the *Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/Madrid*



'close to Newark/on the way to Sarajevo' in, part 2: beauty and the east (detail), 2003 (2010), from 'untitled', 1999-2011

Récits alternatifs brings together a collection of videographic works stemming as much from image as from narrative. The work of Jayce Salloum features an approach critical of the complex relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, since the reality in which he is interested is highly "sensitive". This work is elaborated, unlike the inevitably simplistic and hasty approach of the mass media, with acute awareness of the common practice and social, political, aesthetic and, more generally, ideological effects of representation.

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Centre culturel canadien - Canadian Cultural Centre

5, rue de Constantine - 75007 Paris

Tél : 01 44 43 21 90 - Fax : 01 44 43 21 99

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Tuned into the places and people (from the anonymous farmer to the national treasure) linked to major territorial, cultural and ethnic conflicts, but on the margins of stereotyped, dominant or official discourse, this work does not cover events or brandish messages, but archives encounters, exchanges, traces, impressions, expressions, confidences and wandering thoughts.

Récits alternatifs presents the visual and aural crackling that animates the work of Salloum and does not lead the viewer to a specific place but keeps him or her in a less comfortable area of exchanges back and forth that undermine the fixity of tightly circumscribed positions and perceptions. Personal and public archives still constitute the material of an art that is not afraid of entering into the complexity of the contexts of pressing political and human issues, from where beauty manages to emerge alongside sorrows and ruins. Salloum's art leads the viewer to ask him- or herself disturbing questions about the various forms of nationalism, transnationality, integration, colonization, migrations, beliefs and domestic conflicts that haunt the individual and define whether or not he or she belongs to a group, history, nation-state or ideology. These questions are not asked but emerge in the particular form of composition and montage that characterizes the work of Salloum, filled with words and images and elaborated using a point of view in constant motion.



'pause' from *Once You've Shot the Gun You Can't Stop the Bullet*, 1988

The first major solo exhibition by the artist in France, *Récits alternatifs* intertwines in time and in space works conceived at various points in Salloum's career and in places as varied as the former Yugoslavia visited after the 1999 bombings (Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Skopje), Lebanon (in Beirut in 1994, then in two Palestinian refugee camps in 2000), Paris (where the artist met an emblematic figure of the Lebanese resistance, Soha Bechara, in 1999), Kelowna, British Columbia, home of the Syilx Nation and the birthplace of Salloum after his family moved from Lebanon to Saskatchewan then to British Columbia, the Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan after the destruction of the colossal fifth-century Buddha statues in 2001. In these places steeped in history, which the artist surveys between the present and the past and based on encounters with local individual histories, *Récits alternatifs* adds three older works directly linked to a specific place: *In the Absence of Heroes* (1984), *The Ascent of Man* (1985–87) and *Once You've Shot the Gun You Can't Stop the Bullet* (1988). In a manner of speaking these works are respectively essays on the individual decision-making process, the influence of the media on the individual and interpersonal relations, the collapse of love and the regeneration imagined through a half-real, half-metaphorical journey taking the artist from Beirut to Vancouver via Jerusalem, Las Vegas and Tijuana.

The exhibition thus presents an important ensemble of works from the major videographic project in progress *untitled*, a living archive that spans over ten years of work (from 1999 to the present): *part 1* (everything and nothing), *part 2* (beauty and the east), *part 3* (a: occupied territories and b: (as if) beauty never ends), *part 4* (terra incognita), and the most recent part – the seventh – the result of a journey through Afghanistan. This ensemble enters into dialogue with the works produced between 1984 and 1994 (including some that are themselves made up of several parts) whose duration ranges from 8 to 103 minutes. *Récits alternatifs* brings the parts together and breaks up the ensembles with the intention of placing an open dialogue at the very heart of the structure of the exhibition.



'water light' in part 3b: (as if) beauty never ends..., 2000 (2003), from 'untitled', 1999-2011

Of Lebanese origin, Jayce Salloum lives Vancouver. His work has been presented in numerous local, national and international exhibitions, and notably at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1998; at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, and the Santa Monica Museum of Art in 2001; at the 8th Havana Biennial in 2003; at the 15th Biennale of Sydney and the Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, in 2006; at the Royal Museum of Ontario, Toronto, in 2010. Jayce Salloum: *History of the Present*, a retrospective of works from the past twenty-five years, coproduced by the Mendel Art Gallery (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan), The Kamloops Art Gallery (Kamloops, British Columbia) and The Confederation Centre Art Gallery (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island), will have been exhibited in various institutions across Canada between 2009 and 2012.

His videos have been projected at international festivals around the world, Le Centre pour l'image contemporaine in Geneva (in 2001 and 2002); Caixa Forum for Contemporary Art, Barcelona, the Cinémathèque Française, Paris, Impakt Festival, Utrecht, Mostra Curta Cinema – Rio de Janeiro International Short Film Festival, Brazil, Rotterdam International Film Festival, the Netherlands (in 2003); California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, and the Singapore International Film Festival (in 2004); Transat Vidéo, Caen (in 2005); Diagonale, Forum Stadtpark, Graz, Austria; Pressure Points, Sydney Arab Film Festival, Australia, European Media Art Festival, Osnabrück, Germany (in 2007).

Jayce Salloum's writing has appeared in numerous publications. The most recent include: *The Archive* (Whitechapel, London/The MIT Press, 2006), *Projecting Migration: Transcultural Documentary Practice* (Wallflower Press, London, 2007), *Damp: Contemporary Vancouver Media Art* (Anvil Press, Vancouver, 2008) and *Practical Dreamers: Conversations with Movie Artists* (Coach House Press, Toronto, 2008).