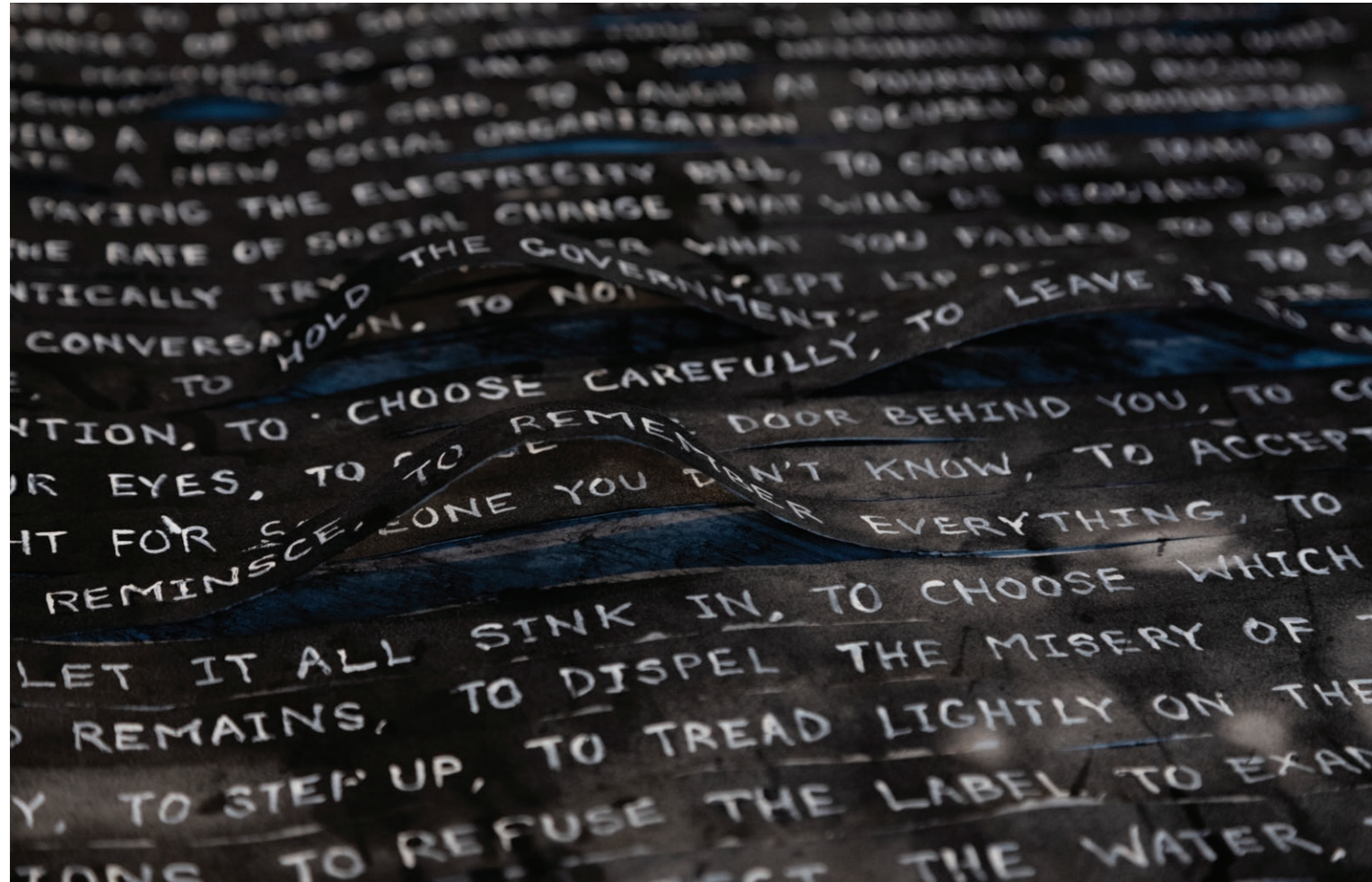


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ART AND CULTURE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARAB WORLD

DOES ANYONE ELSE SMELL DEAD FISH?

LAHORE BIENNALE • SHARJAH ARCHITECTURE TRIENNIAL
DESERTX ALULA • 21,39 • ARGO FACTORY • AMAR KANWAR
CALINE AOUN • ANNABEL DAOU • STEVE MCQUEEN
HITO STEYERL X HARUN FAROCKI
BEIRUT • CHILE • HONG KONG



Annabel Daou. *WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS*. Detail. Image courtesy of the artist and signs & symbols, New York

MULTI-VOCAL

Beirut-born, NYC-based **Annabel Daou** embeds language, paper and audio into her intricate performative installations. Her latest solo exhibition, *WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS* (ended 9 February at **signs and symbols**), drew from the American Declaration of Independence, signifying that pivotal moment when one is compelled to act. From a scroll-like work that extended across the gallery to an immersive sound piece featuring Daou's narrative from sites of protest around the world, including Chile and Lebanon, an entanglement of voices powerfully wove humanity and its discontents into the surface of her work.

Words by Asha Sheshadri

In 1930, Hannah Arendt reflected on Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and registered that, "despite this complete arbitrariness, despite the absence of images, the poetry does not congeal into a meaningless mass of associations. This is because every particular element, and everything resisting connection in its particularity, rests on the ground of what is actually to be said, the ground that first stirs up the isolated images." This sentiment resonates with the varying forms of poesis

within Annabel Daou's latest solo exhibition *WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS*, functioning as a mise-en-scène of her six-month performance-in-residence at signs and symbols in New York.

Within the installation, research, practice and materials converged in multivalent forms; text, paper and recorded audio intertwined in a way that was equally incisive and meditative. Through separate works, Daou investigated the politics and poetics of driving forces behind action



Annabel Daou. *WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS*. Installation view. Image courtesy of the artist and signs & symbols, New York

and expression. Utilizing the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 as a primer (in its title and concept), she constructed a 235-inch paper scroll across the length of the gallery. The sculptural palimpsest was inscribed with a charter culled from various individuals and etched over multiple times in a state of terminal revision. The text – constructed of responses oriented around the question: 'What is my revolution?' The responses – sourced from everyday sentiments, phrases and movement (for example: take a step back, wait for the dawn, take it to the streets, leave no feelings behind). The scroll was produced from microfibre archival paper (used most frequently for storing and protecting fragile documents) in an interesting corollary to the layering, circulation and mutation of the text on the scroll itself, which was applied with white correction fluid.

In this work Daou re-imagines by re-mixing, and extends this strategy to the recorded audio piece, a multichannel audio installation juxtaposed alongside the scroll. She sources audio material from others: from the Internet, friends, street recordings. The 24-minute seductive

recitation of text in the first person had the artist's own voice looped and layered upon ambient and street sounds of protest. The sound draws you in, with whispers and echoes of various pitches. Much like the progression of the scroll itself throughout the space, it seems to retract and amend itself repeatedly.

Daou deploys each medium as its own form of inquiry – and effectively so – within the space itself. In its scale, the scroll is much larger than the viewer, allowing for an immersive registry of its text and the images it may conjure. While listening to the audio work, the viewer can look out the window upon the quotidian activity of Forsyth Street, imposing onto their own reality chants from protests embedded within the recording.

WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS performed a seizure and study of the moment of action, and the ways in which we are compelled to act (individually and collectively). The show at once probed and revered language; its fullness and incapability, and the confluence of violence, languor and candour that take place within.