

Hazar and the Anzel

Soundscape and Visual Installation
21-26 May 2013

Space here is granular powder, silence and brittle junctures
Mohammed Dib, *L'Aube Ismaël*, 1996

***Hazar and the Anzel* is a creative response to The Hunterian's exhibition of the same title from Writer Madeleine Campbell, Sonic Artist Bethan Parkes and Visual Artist Birthe Jørgensen.**

This Hunterian Associates collaboration has arisen from the artists' ongoing project *Jetties*, which is based on Campbell's translations of poems by Algerian Author Mohammed Dib. *Jetties* is an assemblage of fragments of prose and poetry from Dib's oeuvre, conceived as a platform for interpretation by performers, visual and sound artists in a variety of frames and contexts.

Featuring fragments of Dib's poems in French, Scottish and Arabic voices, the installation's movement, sound and spoken word offer a fluid, nomadic counterpoint to the gallery environment. Created with plastic textures and modern audio technology, these transient visual and sound shapes aim to release contemporary narratives that challenge cultural perspectives, past and present, of this ancient Biblical story.

Algerians live with, on their doorsteps, one of the greatest deserts in the world. Even when they ignore it, even when they forget it, it is there and not just on their doorsteps but inside them, inside the dark crypt of their psyche. An integral element of their physical landscape, it is no less a part of the landscape of their mind, and the desert, let us not forget, all three revealed religions were born there. Whether in this or that desert does not alter very much: every desert resembles the desert, as water does water. It is everywhere the site of negation of History, just as, through their passage and their appearance there, religions are ahistorical. Site of every beginning, the desert is also the site of every regression.

Mohammed Dib, *L'Arbre à dire*, 1998

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a rare work by 18th century Scottish painter John Runciman. In the tradition of heroic, narrative paintings, Runciman's painting *Hagar and the Angel* (c. 1766) evokes the Old Testament story in which Abraham's slave Hagar bore him a son and was banished with their child Ishmael to the desert. According to the Old Testament, a text recognized as sacred by the religions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, Ishmael is the father of the nation of Islam. Abraham's barren wife Sarah eventually bore him a son, Isaac, father of the Jewish nation.

Hazar and the Anzel draws on Dib's retelling of the story in his poetry collection *L'Aube Ismaël* (*Dawn Ismaël*, 1996) to engage with current themes of identity, exile and migration.

MOHAMMED DIB

Born in Tlemcen, Algeria, Mohammed Dib (1920-2003) is widely regarded as a founding father of Algerian literature. Expelled from Algerian territory in 1959 for political reasons, he has always written in French and received the Prix de l'Union des Écrivains Algériens in 1966, the Grand Prix de la Francophonie de l'Académie française in 1994 and the Prix Mallarmé in 1998. His contribution to Maghrebi literature includes essays, a play, over twenty novels and short stories and nine poetry collections. Sources that have informed Dib's oeuvre range from pre-Islamic Odes and twelfth-century 'Attār Neyshābouri's *Conference of the birds* to the works of Samuel Beckett and Virginia Woolf. His oeuvre has been described as a 'hymn to cultural exchange'.

It is true that Dib never manifested a religious faith and always maintained a simple materialism. His is the real world, yet there remains a questioning of this world, a questioning of the meaning of things, which affirms itself increasingly in his later texts.

Habib Tengour, 2011

Co-editor

The University of California Book of North African Literature 2012

Hagar aux cris

Hagar Awakens

هاجر صارخة

*Sans un regard
En arrière, elle s'éloigne
Ismaël dans ses bras.*

*Without looking
Back, she walks away
Ismaël in her arms.*

بِدُونِ التَّفَاتَةِ
إِلَى الْوَرَاءِ، تَتَبَعِدُ
إِسْمَاعِيلَ فِي أَحْضَانِهَا

*Grand corps dispersé,
Le vent de vive voix
Dès lors n'en finit pas
De jargonner.*

*Great body dispersed,
The wind's voice quickens
Ever since then in
Endless jargon.*

جَسَدٌ عَظِيمٌ مَنُثُورٌ،
الرِّيحُ بِصَوْتِ مُحْتَدِمٍ
مُنذُ ذَلِكَ لَا تَكْفُ
عَنِ الرَّطَاتَةِ

*Presqu'illusoire
Ce qui se veut ouvrir
Et va s'ouvrir. Le désert
Avec ses poumons
Et l'oubli des mots.*

*Almost illusory
This want to be open
That shall open. The desert
With its bellows and
The words' oblivion.*

تَقْرِبًا وَهَمِي
مَا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْفَتِحَ
وَ سَيَنْفَتِحُ. الصَّحْرَاءُ
بِرِنَاتِهَا
وَ نِسْيَانِ الْكَلِمَاتِ

*À tout va
Le vent tisonne.
Et sur la vallée, l'oubli,
Le vertige des dunes.*

*Every which way
The hot wind stains
And upon the valley, oblivion
The dunes' vertigo.*

مُسْرَعَةً فِي كُلِّ اتِّجَاهٍ
الرِّيحُ تَسْتَعْرِ
وَ عَلَى الْوَادِي النِّسْيَانُ
وَ دَوَارُ الْكُتْبَانِ

Mohammed Dib, 1996

Translated by
Madeleine Campbell, 2013

Translated by
Hakim Miloud, 2001

The isolated Arabic character ج (variously transliterated as jeem, jim or jüm) indicates the Standard Arabic pronunciation of the 'g' sound in 'Hagar', which is comparable to the 'g' in 'Angel' and differs from its pronunciation in French and English.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS & AUTHORS

Birthe Jørgensen is studying for a Masters of Letters, Sculpture, at Glasgow School of Art. She is exploring how sacred and secular spaces are created in materialist times through installations conceived through processes drawn from experimental theatre.

Madeleine Campbell is a Canadian bilingual who lived in France for many years. Her creative interests include francophone literature, surrealism, ekphrastic and found poetry. She is currently researching translation as performance at Glasgow University.

Bethan Parkes is currently undertaking a creative practice PhD in Sonic Arts at the University of Glasgow, exploring spatial affect in acousmatic composition.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Soundscape Voices and Languages

Abdelkader Boutaleb – Algerian-French and Arabic
Dr Tuleen Boutaleb – Syrian Arabic
Madeleine Campbell – Francophone
Frances Higson – West of Scotland
Christopher John McMillan – West of Scotland

Arabic typescript: Abdelkader Boutaleb

Publishers

L'Arbre à dire was published by Albin Michel in 1998, *L'Aube Ismaël* by Éditions Tassili in 1996, then Éditions de la Différence in 2007 and the Arabic version by Éditions Barzakh (Algiers, 2001).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Jetties:

Madeleine Campbell: m.campbell.1@research.gla.ac.uk
<http://jettiesproject.tumblr.com>

The Hunterian Associates Programme:

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<http://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/learning/hunterianassociates/>

INSTALLATION DETAILS

The Hunterian
University of Glasgow
82 Hillhead Street
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21-26 May 2013

Tue – Sat: 10.00am – 5.00pm
Sun: 11.00am – 4.00pm (Closed Mon)