

THE HILLSIDE

Sulāiman Majali
saracen go home

01.02.20 — 29.03.20

saracen go home is a new sculpture and sound installation made by artist Sulāiman Majali. The exhibition brings together sculptures; a collection of printed images that juxtapose visual and historical references; and a sound work that is poetically structured and spatially expansive.

Central to this project is the exploration of *diaspora* and the condition of being *diasporic*. Diaspora has traditionally referred to people displaced from the historic centres of their culture or families. Recent developments in diaspora studies challenge the binary opposition between diasporic and indigenous. Instead suggesting that these states of being are mutually dependent: one cannot exist without the other. Visual culture and aesthetics have been shown to be a key part of how colonial and settler regimes exert and solidify their power. The diasporic position, that Sulāiman works with, offers a way of seeing connections and stories that have been obscured in conventional histories of nations and nation-states.

In this exhibition Sulāiman has constructed a set, a monochromatic waiting-room which plays host to the viewer and their experience of the new sound work. This audio piece is a collage of fragments that the artist has recorded and collected over many years, combining both original and found digital elements.

The title of the exhibition, *saracen go home* is taken from racist graffiti that was sprayed on a mosque in Cumbernauld in 2016. Alongside ‘saracen go home’ the words ‘deus vult’ were scrawled: a Latin phrase that has its origins in the First Crusade (1096-1099) and which is roughly translated as ‘God wills it’. This phrase has been re-appropriated from the video game *Crusader Kings* and used in racist memes shared on Internet forums such as Reddit and 4Chan.

In *saracen go home* Sulāiman traces stories from Collective’s historic site, using the idea of ‘folding and creasing’ source material as both a conceptual technique and a poetic strategy. Collective becomes the crease in one of Sulāiman’s poetic folds, bringing together a series of historical events that inform and are referenced in *saracen go home*. These events include David Roberts’ (Scottish Royal Academician and Orientalist painter) visit to Jordan in 1839 where he produced lithographs of the ruined city of Petra. In the same year, the former Astronomer Royal for Scotland Thomas Henderson, published his measurements (taken at the Cape of Good Hope) of the distance from earth to Alpha Centauri: a star system which takes its traditional name *Rijil Kentaurus* from a Latinisation of the Arabic الرجل القنطورس (ar-Rijl al-Qanṭūris). The Cape of Good Hope was also where photographer David Gill captured an image of one of the

great comets of the 19th Century. On the same day in 1882, the Scots Guards fought in the battle of Tel El Kebir in Egypt to secure British imperial trade routes through the Suez Canal.

Sulāiman Majali is an artist and writer. In 2020 Sulāiman will participate in Glasgow International and has been short-listed for the Margaret Tait Award. Previous group exhibitions and events include: *something vague and irrational*, Celine Gallery, Glasgow (2019); *assembly of the poets, a reading as part of EARTH HOLD*, Qalandiya International Biennial (2018); *Mene Mene Tekel Parsin*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, UK (2017); 8th Cairo Video Festival, Cairo, Egypt (2017); *this scattering of minds; like seeds*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna & Transmission Gallery, Glasgow; *as if we were strangers; that strangeness was ours*, CCA, Glasgow; *Dark Speculative Futurity and the Rise of Neo-Nationalism (The Search for New Dimensions)*, Tohu Magazine conference, Jaffa, Palestine (2017). Sulāiman is currently participating in Talbot Rice Gallery Residents programme.

A selection of books chosen by the artist are available to purchase in the Collective Matter shop located in the Observatory.

COLLECTIVE

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1. *saracen go home*

sound, stage monitor, mic stand, limestone, peacock sword tail feather, green 4674 extruded acrylic mirror, 3D print of a 12th Century Almohad era fragment excavated on the southern Iberian Coast, artificial lemon peel, insulating tape red, waiting room seating, newsprint (image, text), rock.

2. *though we know the dream is built from the collateral of our minds and the shrapnel that lies within it*

sound, 42m37s.

Satellites Programme is Collective's development programme for emergent artists and producers based in Scotland. Satellites aims to support practitioners at a pivotal, emergent point in their careers through a critical programme of retreats, workshops, studio visits and group discussions, public exhibitions, events and publishing. Artists are selected from an open submission by a new panel each year. The 2020 participants are Alison Scott, Kirsty Hendry, Sulaiman Majali, Holly McLean and Becky Šik.

The deadline for applications to the next Satellites programme is April 6th 2020. Please see our website or speak to a member of staff for further details.

