IS IT REAL?

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture in the department of Sculpture of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

By

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IS IT REAL?
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Abstract

The architecture of Doha, Qatar is defined by skins of glass. When the sun shines upon the layers of glass, it creates a shimmery reflective grid across the surface of the city. These reflections, while visually intriguing, conceal many private realities behind the surface.

As a multidisciplinary artist, I attempt to maneuver in the space between the opacity of the facade and stories that lie behind. Specifically, I use this space to directly expose the contradictions that I encounter here.

Introduction

Before I became an [redacted], I worked as a ..TRY AGAIN.. for the [redacted], a ..TRY AGAIN.. ..TRY AGAIN.. in ..TRY AGAIN.. in ..TRY AGAIN.. During my last six months, while designing a ..TRY [redacted] for one of the ..TRY AGAIN.., I received several [redacted] AGAIN.. to include in [redacted]. One of them detailed the [redacted] and range of ..TRY AGAIN.. in ..TRY AGAIN..

One day, in particular, I had a meeting with one of the ..TRY AGAIN.. I'm working with; during our meeting, she saw a printed version of the ..TRY AGAIN.. file I've been sent. She told me that I shouldn't have this [redacted], and I was sent this ..TRY AGAIN.. by mistake. There was no going back now since I already have the [redacted], but she asked me to not show the difference between [redacted] and ..TRY AGAIN..

After she left my [redacted], I was thinking of how valuable this secret [redacted] I was holding with my own hands, I turned to my computer and instead of continuing my work, I started to find out the ..TRY AGAIN.. of [redacted] and ..TRY AGAIN.. in [redacted]. I was pretty disappointed to find that the ..TRY AGAIN.. of [redacted] is around [redacted] of the total ..TRY AGAIN.. in [redacted]. I wasn't disappointed because it is a ..TRY AGAIN.., I was disappointed because this ..TRY AGAIN.. is available [redacted] and it's easy to [redacted]. In fact, I heard this [redacted] several times before when I watch any [redacted] informing people about ..TRY AGAIN..

But if this information is already [redacted], why make it a [redacted]? and if a ..TRY AGAIN.. and already-known [redacted] like ..TRY AGAIN.. is a [redacted], how can they handle more sensitive [redacted]?

SPeAk EnGlISH yOu ArE iN aMeRiCa

Language Policing

Language

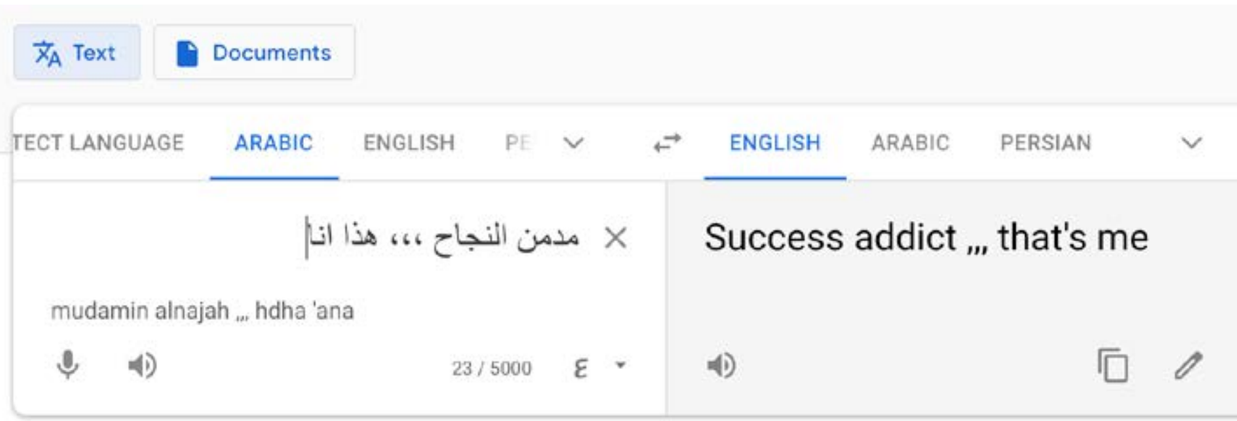
Why does English command a larger space?

بيني وبين هوايا حربُ غلابِ	Between me and Hawaya is a war of victory
أأبوح أم أبقى أُكَتم مابي ؟!	Do I disclose or keep silence ?!
إن الهوى يبغي الظهور و إنني	Love wants to appear and I am
أخفيه بين قصيدتي و كتابي	I hide it between my poem and my book
ولذاك شبة الحرب اللتي	That is a pseudo-war that
فيها الهزائم كاسراتٌ بابي	Defeats Babi breakers
هي لعبة الموت اللتي لا تنتهي	It is an endless game of death
ماخِلت أن الموتَ في الألعابِ	I thought death was in games
طلب المبارزةَ الهوىٰ فأتيتهُ	He asked for a passion for fencing, and I came to him
وسللت سيفَ الدمعِ من أقرابِ	And the sword of tears slipped out of relatives
و تحدر الدمعُ الذي أخفيته من مقلتي فتقطعت أسبابي	And the tears that I concealed from my eyeballs cut off my reasons
صرخ الهوى فرحاً بنشوةِ نصرهِ	Passion cried out with joy at the ecstasy of his victory
و هُزمت لما خانني أصحابي	I was defeated when my friends betrayed me
حتى الدموع تخونني و أنا الذي	Even tears betray me who I am
أسكنتها عينيّ دون حسابِ	I dwelt in my eyes without an account
ذي طعنةٌ في الظهرِ بل هي ضعنةٌ	A stab in the back, but rather a weakness
للصبر دون بوادرٌ لإيابِ	For patience without signs of return
فاليوم أنثر عقد أسراري لكم	Today I spread my sacraments for you
عل الكلام يزيل بعض مصابي	Perhaps speaking removes some of those afflicted
أنا لست أدري ما أقول وكيف أبدأ	I don't know what to say and how to start
إنني في حَيرَةٍ و ضبابِ	I am confused and foggy
هي سنّةٌ ، أبناءَ آدمَ كابدوا	It is a Sunnah, the children of Adam suffered
لبنات آدم حِرفةَ الأحبابِ	The daughters of Adam are the craft of loved ones
لكنّ بعضهُمُ يحبوا لشهوةٍ	But some of them love with lust
والبعض حبهمُ كـ عضّ النابِ	Some people like them like biting a canine
أحببتها و أقولها بصراحةٍ	I loved it and said it honestly
إن الكناية لا توضح مابي !؟	The metonym does not clarify what is mabe !?
لما التقيت بها لأول مرةٍ	When I first met her
و مزجت حسن كلامها بـ خطابِ	And she mixed her good words with a speech
لاحت قلوب الحب في عيني لها	Hearts of love dawned on her eyes
فتقطعت نفسي و طار صوابي	I cut myself off and flew off my mind
و غضضت طرفي عندها لكنني	And I turned my ends then, but I
بـ بصيرتي أحببت لا بترابِ	I loved my insight, not dust
هذا الهوى ، لاشهوةٌ بهميّةٌ تفنى	This passion, no frivolous desire perishes
و يبقى إثمها بكتابي	And her iniquity remains in my book
ما أنصفوا إذ يدّعونَ محبّةً	They are not fair when they claim love
لجمال عينٍ أو لـ بردُ لعابِ	For the beauty of the eye or for the cold of saliva
سطحيةٌ عمياء لا تحفل بها	A blind superficiality that does not cover it
أويعرف الإنسانُ بالجلبابِ	Or the human being is known as the jilbab
أرجوكي لا تتغيري ، إني أحبكِ	Please do not change, I love you
هكذا بعباءةٍ و حجابِ	Like this, with a cloak and a veil
أحسبتِ أن السافراتِ ملكنني ؟!	Did you think that the unveiled women left me ?!
أم خلتِ أني إلى سواكِ طِلابِ	Mother, I am students besides you
أيرينَ حقيَ واجباً ، إن كنّ	Erin is my right and an obligation, if they are
لا يرَ عينَ الله في الأثوابِ	He does not see the eye of God in the garments
لكنّه التقليد أحكم أمرَه	But he is the wisest tradition
و الغفلةُ أستولت علىٰ الألبابِ	And negligence took over
و غداً سيرقدُ كلنا في حفرةٍ	Tomorrow we will all lie in a hole
فـ يرينَ في ما قلتُ كلّ صوابِ	So they see all the right things in what I said
لا تحفلي بالناس إنّكِ منيتي	Do not be around people, you are my dead
ومودتي ياشمعة المحرابِ	My affection is the candle of the oracle
ياجملةً عربيةً و النّاس لغوٌ	A complete Arabic and people are verbal
لا محل له من الإعرابِ	Do not replace him express

I have been interested in language as a secret code and google translation as a community contribu-tion. Surfing twitter, I realized a significant number of people ask and command people from their community not to speak or technically write in not English and use their own language instead, specifically when they are talking about sensitive subjects. English is a very accessible language, and using it will make people outside their communities know about what's happening.

For example, a year ago, a number of women in Qatar started to post their experiences concerning male guardianship in making key decisions in everyday life like marriage, employment, traveling, and so forth. They were discussing the above problems in English, even though they faced a backlash from Twitter users asking them to list their concerns either in Arabic or not at all; a Human Rights Watch's senior researcher on women's rights noticed their discussions and published a re-port a year later observing male guardianship in Qatar.

This practice of censoring issues emerged from the constant westernizing and increasingly detach-ing Arab society from long-held traditions. It is a way to resist the ongoing and gradual elimination of the endangered Arab identity.



Exhausted and don't have the time to police people on the internet?

Voice Your Opinion is an easy tool to do the job for you.

Simply search for an insult word of your choice on the search bar and pick audio to use.

I Saw Heaven,
I'm Running Towards *it*

I Realised my Mistakes,
and I'm Working on Them

The Day *of*
Judgement

My Loved Ones,
I Don't Want to *See* You Burning in Hell

What is Imposed on Me to Listen

Gathered around our family T.V, I remember resisting the shows of Islamic scholars preferred by my mother. I usually don't sit and watch with her, but I am usually around the living room lounging with my phone or talking to my siblings. From these shows, some certain sounds bothered me. These sounds were playing before and after Islamic scholars' shows as theme music. They were also playing in between their shows before and after commercial breaks. I wasn't the only one who was bothered by them; my very vocal sister made several comments every time she heard them.

These sounds were of men making dramatic melodies mimicking musical instruments using only their vocals; to put the viewer in a certain frame of mind. Interestingly, Islamic scholars used to say that musical instruments are forbidden (haram), so instead, they used men to mimic these sounds, maneuvering around what is, in their opinion, forbidden or not. The men's voices were very soft and feminized, which is another thing they forbid.

We (my sisters and myself) used to dance in a gesture of mockery, and sing along with them, not because we like the melodies, but because it's rebellious against Islamic scholars' views, it was a way to live with what we resent. Sound can travel well through water; 70% of the human body is water; even though humans might not notice, sound has a significant impact on the human body. Giving that sound is made of vibrations, it can vibrate through our bloodstream, and depending on the energy of the sound vibrations, we are affected by it. A conductor or any sound creator can direct people to act the way they want.

The sounds we used to hear in the Islamic scholars' shows were very manipulative, especially next to what they used to say. To me, it seemed like they wanted to soften the viewer while listening to them talking in a condescending tone. I realized how powerful sound is and how they were using sounds as a tool to condition people and control them to manipulate their message.

In my practice, I borrow these sounds and make them my own. Camouflage them with different sounds that I record. I create stories and set up an environment with an ambient sound setting. It is an act of rebellion, similar to what my sisters and I were doing.

CATFISH

1:08
FATIMH .
@__angelx__
Replying to @3llll4
نزع الحجاب مو دليل على الحريه
الشخخخصيهه انتو فاهمين الحريه
غلط ،الحجاب واجب على كل امرأه
واججبب في الدين وابد مو شيء تفتخرين
فيه وتنشرينه لانه هالشيء يغضب ربك.
Translate Tweet
12:13 PM · 01/12/2020 · Twitter for iPhone
1 Quote Tweet 37 Likes
FATIMH . @__angelx... · 01/12/2020
Replying to @__angelx__ and @3llll4
الحريه الشخصيه مثلًا لك حريه ف اقتراح رأيك
في افكاركك في كل اللي تبي بس بحدود الدين ذا
مفي حريه من ناحيه الحرام والحلال .
1
11
Show replies
Tweet your reply

Last year, I started to build an archive of tweets and put them in categories. For this specific category, I'm collecting tweets from women policing other women on how to dress. One them @__angelx__ tweeted: "removing [the] hijab is not personal freedom; your understanding of freedom is wrong; [the] hijab is an obligatory [sic] on every woman in religion and is not something to remove publically and proudly because this angers your God." I collected Twitter feeds screenshots of Ironically, the handle who wrote this tweet chose as her profile picture an attractive woman not wearing the hijab and looking just outside the frame.
In the Middle East, traditional religious families prevent their daughters from posting their pictures online. In response, these women will adopt other pictures for their social media profile; some post as animals, or places, or political figures, or their artwork, or as blank colors. Anonymity takes many faces. In this case, @__angelx__ assumed the guise of this attractive influencer, who happens to believe that "removing the hijab is not personal freedom."

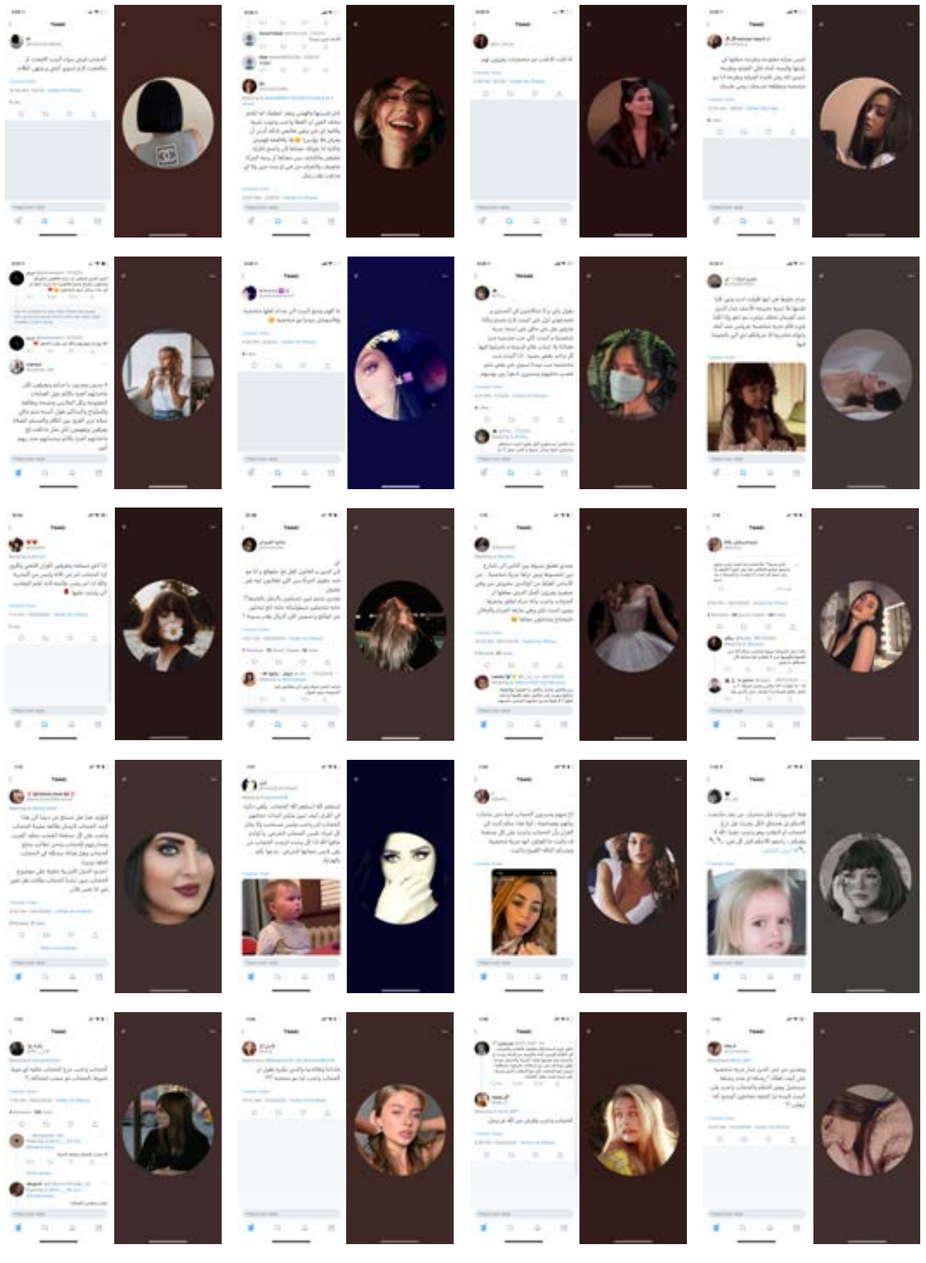
Obviously, there is a significant contradiction between what @__angelx__ said and the picture she chose to represent herself. Yet, as I combed through her tweets, I couldn't help but ask, "Is this picture actually who she identifies with?" It is reasonable to assume that @__angelx__ and the profile she chose live radically different lives. The profile photo wears a dress in a public space, in what is probably a bar. She gently nibbles at a breadstick and looks coyly away from the camera. The sex appeal is evident.
Is @__angelx__ romanticizing a life she could never have? Is it a way to cope with the system she is in? Is she staging her presence virtually?

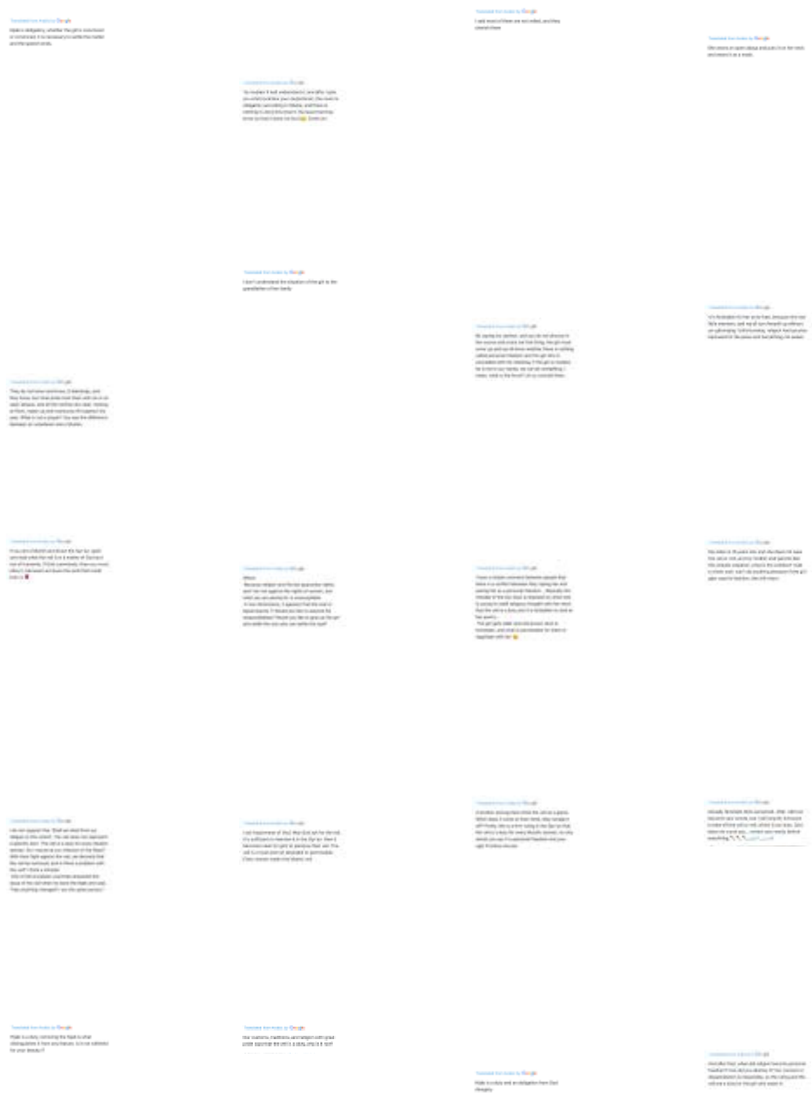
Online, I'm a bearing witness to the contradictions of a modern Middle East.
A profile avatar (or Avi) is the first aspect people notice, especially on Twitter, where it's heavily text-based. A profile picture is the only visual element and an invitation for people to picture someone's appearance and personality. It is the equivalent of a passport photo or other legal documents that serve as evidence of one's true identity. The difference is that profile pictures in social media are not legal; social media users can create their own virtual characters, communicating and interacting with real individuals online.

Are women imposing their religious "beliefs" on other women actually believing in their message? Is it a performance they adapted to get benefits or cope with their environment, in other words, a political move to get what they desire? The idea of contradiction in itself is complicated that the person exercising contradiction is also trying to survive in that system. In surviving, they become pressed as well the woman imposing on another woman, the contradiction could be a way of surviving in that system these women are not innocent or villains.

Translated from Arabic by Google

Taking off the veil is not a sign of personal freedom. You understand freedom is a mistake. The veil is a duty for every woman. It is obligatory for every woman and is obligated in religion and forever there is nothing to be proud of and spread about it because this thing angers your Lord.





The One Way Mirror

The One Way Mirror

I was about 13 years old when smartphones with cameras got popularized. Growing up in a conservative place, people grew concerns about these smartphones. Weddings started to have security with handheld and walk-through metal detectors to inspect people if they have phones with cameras.

I remember one day, I read a social media post suggesting to inspect fitting rooms before we can try the picked-up clothes by placing the index finger on the surface of the mirror. “If there is a small space in between your finger and its reflection, that means it is a regular mirror, and you can try the clothes you picked, but if there is no space between your finger and its reflection, that means it is a one-way mirror, and someone is watching you on the other side.”

Fitting rooms are one of the few private spaces in public settings. Human behavior can change immediately once entering a fitting room, removing clothes, having a moment of only wearing under-wear, putting on clothes, deciding whether or not to buy, and looking at themselves transform in look and character. Doing all that in a small room, some of them only covered in cur-tains, can be a very daunting experi-ence. When you put another layer of systematic experience collectively created by the culture you live in, it doesn’t give any room for making mistakes or life experi-enc-es; people always have to put pre-cautions and test everything around them, even in private and intimate spaces.

Endless Work, Unless the Power is Out

Follow the Line

The sewing machine is working non-stop, trying to follow a straight line in a non-ending fabric; it is trying to follow a tradition, a behavior, a duty it is distant to do. It makes mistakes, and it is self-destructive.