

THEY PUT ME IN THE MORGUE ALIVE

Audiovisual installation, 63 videos running simultaneously in a loop, 2012, edition of 5+2 AP

THEY PUT ME IN THE MORGUE ALIVE is an experimental research based on the life of the Syrian population who has been facing for more than a year what is considered, within the "Arab Spring", the most sensitive, bloody and controversial revolution.

The work analyses and presents the following aspects:

1 - The Syrian government's violent crackdown against its own population.

The population has been fighting the policy of terror led by the current head of state, Bashar al-Assad, for more than one year. The syrian dictatorship was set up by his father Hafez al-Assad and the Baath party through a coup d'Etat in 1970.

2 - The condition of citizens and activists.

In particular the condition of residents in most Sunni areas that are defined as the epicenters of the resistance such as Deraa, Homs, Idlib, Hama, Aleppo and Damascus. Their difficulties, their desire and their reactions to the violent repression of the Assad regime. This repression is documented day after day on several YouTube Channels through videos that have been shot and uploaded by ordinary citizens.

3 - The professionalization of the revolution.

For professionalization, I mean the process that led the revolutionary movement to take shape, mainly for reasons of "isolation" as the international media were not allowed to enter the country since the beginning of the crackdown. This movement has become an organization that works collectively within its borders and beyond. It manages events, their dissemination and communication and reports the complaints of abuse and violations of human rights carried forward by the government.

Specifically, my interest goes to the professionalization of media, including video makers, ordinary people who risk their lives on the street to film and report what is happening in Syria.

This kind of work is usually done by professionals like war reporters.

4 - The concept of collective production.

It is based on an analogy with the phenomenon of Crowdsourcing and specifically by one of its methods: the Crowd Creation.

The Crowd Creation is a process through which a customer asks for help of the community

to answer to an issue like creating or redesigning a logo of a company (see major brands like Pepsi, Toyota and others which increasingly seek help of consumers to perform certain work in order to make them more active and therefore related to the brand itself).

The analogy between my work and the Crowd Creation is that my artwork wants to experience both the intelligence and the collaborative production but it is related to it only to the basic concept, that is the use of collective creativity in order to create an oeuvre that is the result of a collective work.

5 - The concept of division which is present since the beginning of the revolution.

Those divisions reside within the opposition to the government al-Assad, among countries defined as "friends of Syria" and also among the major powers which would have the intellectual task of finding a possible solution to the crisis, such as a ceasefire and humanitarian assistance. These divisions led to the nth failure of the United Nations who were not able to implement an intervention to prevent the carnage which is taking place in Syria. (See other failures of the UN, 1992-1993, the Somalia, genocide in Rwanda in 1994, 1995, the Srebrenica massacre, 1998 War in the Congo and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict)

6 - The parallel among protesters.

Citizen activists and protesters in Syria and citizen activists in Paris, French or have dual nationality or political refugees.

The work began by getting in touch with some groups of activists, media, Syrians in Syria and abroad and by explaining my intention to start a work about their own revolution. All those contacted people have been highly available.

Then, I started my search (july 2011) by watching Youtube channels daily where militants had uploaded the videos that have been shot across Syria.

As discussed here above at point 3, what was originally a means of communication used to invite people to join the peaceful insurrection, has afterwards become the only way to tell the world what happens in Syria, since the ban on foreign media in the country.

Social networks, YouTube and Smartphones have become the weapon of the media revolution that seeks for the fall of the dictatorial regime that has been ruling for five decades.

The work is an audiovisual installation in which all videos run simultaneously. Nevertheless I could divide it into several parts.

Up to today, I identified five parts.

In the first part, I represented some sandy landscapes of February 2012 in Homs and in particular in Baba Amr, southern district of the city which was the epicenter of the offensive carried forward by al-Assad against the poorest population in order to stop the so called

"terrorist groups". These landscapes depict scenes of some government militias attacks without showing the actual destruction. They show instead feelings of conflict, fueled by suspense that spreads in a paroxysm.

The second part is the parallel between the scenes of protest and anger of Syrians and some mass demonstrations in Paris against the Assad regime. Even here, the degree of suspense is high. Those are crossed moments where one can see various elements related to the Syrian revolution (more precisely to the syrian people) such as anger, power, pride, courage and determination.

The third part is the one that documents. Sixty videos that show the character of the revolution. The videos, here linearly edited due to display matters, loop individually. The aim is to recreate the chaotic environment in which the country is.

The fourth part represents the way through which children perceive the crackdown. How they react to it and how they express themselves through drawing.

The fifth part concerns the concept of division within the opposition and within those institutions like UN that would be in charge to prevent the carnage which is taking place in Syria.

The second part is video projected in the middle of the installation.

The sound generated by those parts enables a fundamental conceptual support and creates the sound of the installation.

In fact, the sound of the first part is repeated in the second and third part as well.

In the second part, the sound is the result of a distortion of the original (first part), time is slowed and dilated. A distortion that leaves behind the foundation to divert and distort events. The path of the syrian revolution is documented and made public through the Internet by the syrian citizens but this path is hijacked by those states allied to the regime who are closely involved in the internal affairs of Syria and support the government.

Because of this distortion of reality, these States are increasingly disrupting international organizations like the UN which should be the guarantors of democracy and human rights. These states are definitely trying to bring down Syria into the abyss of civil war.

The sound of the third part is none other than the installation's sound. It is the sum of the sound of the second part and the set of individual sounds of the the sixty videos running at the same time.

The sound of the installation has two levels of listening.

First, the sound perceived by the sum of all sounds.

Secondly, a certain isolation, with the opportunity to hear the sound of some video only with headphones.

The body of work focuses on people, how they occur, how they suffer repression and how they react to it. It has absolutely no political significance. What interests to me is the communication of events, from the perspective of the oppressed. A journey through the experiences of the Syrian population that proud, courageous and determined struggle against injustice and power, through a troubled path to freedom.

As already mentioned, the importance of this work is to show openly how people are affected by atrocities and violence and also to show how international balances are extremely unstable against the interference of economic interests.

The project requires twenty-two (22) LCD monitors. Four speakers are needed as well.