

BLIND SPOT

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
ArtLeaks
Forensic Architecture

BLIND SPOT is a group exhibition bringing together three artists and collective groups that are engaged in issues of social justice, and whose activities have a real impact in resolving conflict; using advanced technological tools, developing inquiry and investigation methods that can refer to architecture or the exact sciences, they aspire to a future of fair redistributed social balances.

The **BLIND SPOT** exhibition is marked by documentary research, modelling sensitivities, and poetic positions in the field of social discourse, and by artists' civic engagement within civil society in which aesthetics and politics are intimately linked.

The projects shown in the exhibition bear witness to today's artists and artistic practices ability in enhancing aesthetic research in fields that go far beyond the field of exhibitions and contemporary art.

Moreover, the three artists and collectives presented in **BLIND SPOT** share a common goal in working for causes, or contributing to investigations (judicial, humanitarian...), which comes as no surprise given the importance that the porosity of these fields of expertise have played in recent art history.

By extension, these artists highlight the importance of aesthetic research as a field of expertise and representation to reveal blind spots that institutions, states or constituted groups seek to keep hidden. Form becomes a field of study and tension. By revealing leaks (ArtLeaks), by formalizing inaudible sounds (Lawrence Abu Hamdan), by modelling conflict zones (Forensic Architecture), these artists demonstrate that not only aesthetics and associated methodology can produce results from a careful examination of sensitive matter, but by penetrating the dimensional complexity of forms



BLIND SPOT

09 June – 21 July 2018

Access

*Entrée libre
From Tuesday to
Saturday 14.00-18.00
and by appointment*

rue de la Rochette
69190 Saint-Fons FRANCE

Public transport

*Tram T4 Lénine - Corsière
Bus 60 Yves Farge
Bus 93 La Rochette-Clochettes*

lecap-saintfons.com

With the support of the gallery
Mor Charpentier, Paris

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can allow us to fully comprehend what we would not understand through simple normative approaches, (application of exact sciences, politics, social sciences...) offering new options in addressing crisis situations.

Reading forms is not just a matter of dilettante pleasure, it can involve the challenge of interpretations and struggles at the heart of which, to paraphrase Jacques Rancière*, our sensory faculties and our inclination to the sensitive bear witness to our own political strength.

Nicolas Audureau, Curator of the exhibition

* Jacques Rancière, *Le partage du sensible, esthétique et politique*, Paris : La fabrique, 2000.

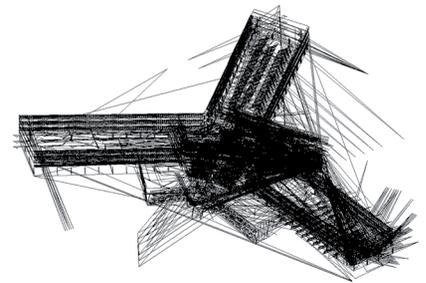
Lawrence Abu Hamdan

Saydnaya (ray traces), 2017

Prints on acetate film, overhead projector, video

Courtesy of Galerie Mor Charpentier and the artist

Credits: Colección Lázaro



Lawrence Abu Hamdan (1985) is an Anglo-Lebanese artist based in Beirut. In 2016, he worked with Amnesty International and Forensic Architecture to investigate the Syrian regime's Saydnaya prison, located 25 kilometres north of Damascus, where more than 13,000 people have been executed since the protests began in 2011. The prison is inaccessible to NGOs and independent observers. The recollections and memories of the few people who were released are the only available resources that provide information to about and document the violence that has been perpetrated there. However, the ability of the detainees to visually see anything in Saydnaya was extremely limited, since most were kept in the dark and blindfolded. As a result, the prisoners developed an acute sensitivity to sound. Lawrence Abu Hamdan worked from survivors' testimonies in order to reconstruct the prison's interior architecture and to understand what was happening there.

'Ray tracing' is a digital visualization tool used in architectural design to map acoustic leaks in a building. Each line models how a sound wave affects walls, floors and ceilings to produce an architectural ultrasound. In *Saydnaya (ray traces)*, the laser ray-tracing is used, not as a design tool, but to visualize

the acoustic constitution of Saydnaya prison in Syria. These traces give a very different picture of the idea that one can have of incarceration. They show that the experience of being imprisoned is not limited to the cell, but that one cannot control the sounds that pass through the prison itself. In these drawings, space is not defined by its visible architecture but by surfaces reflecting sound matter. The shape of the staircase or the central cylindrical watchtower can be distinguished by the way the lines bounce off the surfaces and collide with the surrounding walls and floors. However, the lines do not allow us to visualize the space, but rather to gage how a building «sounds».

ArtLeaks

Reviews, posters, wall articles, 2011-2018

art-leaks.org

ArtLeaks is a collective action initiated by an international group of artists, curators, art historians and intellectuals in response to violations of their professional integrity and labour rights. In the art world like everywhere else, abuse tends to be covered up. ArtLeaks are watchdogs that respond to these situations by shedding light on cases of discrimination and injustice related to the contemporary art world. In their own words, ArtLeaks fight, «against the appropriation of art, culture and political theory engaged by institutions closely linked to the world of finance and politics.

ArtLeaks uses various media supports: a periodical magazine featuring «cases» from the art world, the circulation of which depends on the events in which the group is invited to participate; a plastic version of the magazine in the form of posters, banners, presentation stands and discussions; an **art-leaks.org** blog that gathers testimonies, the PDF archives of the magazine and the exhibitions and events in which the group has participated.



Forensic Architecture

Torture and Detention in Cameroon: The dark side of the U.S.-backed war against Boko Haram, documentary, 11 min. 25, 2017. For Amnesty International's report, *Cameroon's Secret Torture Chambers*.

Forensic Architecture is a multidisciplinary research group founded by architect Eyal Weisman and based at Goldsmiths College London. It brings together researchers from architecture, urban planning, as well as social sciences, cinema, design, media theory, sound engineers and other artistic practices... Where architecture normally handles construction, Forensic Architecture investigates the infrastructures of buildings, bridges, roads, etc., that have been modified, hidden or destroyed during wars in order to determine the causes and circumstances of their modification, obliteration or destruction. Forensic Architecture's investigations are generally conducted on behalf of non-governmental organisations and humanitarian associations and aim to highlight human rights violations.

Since 2014, Cameroon has been at war with Boko Haram, an armed extremist group responsible for thousands of killings and abductions in the Lake Chad basin. Trained and supported by the American and European governments, and armed by private Israeli companies, Cameroonian security forces are acting with increasing impunity against civilians in the Far North region. Between 2015 and 2016, Amnesty International gathered evidence of more than 100 cases of illegal detention, torture and extrajudicial killings of Cameroonian citizens accused of supporting or being members of Boko Haram at some 20 sites across the country. Using testimonies and information provided by Amnesty International, Forensic Architecture reconstructed two of these facilities (a regional military headquarters and an occupied school) to confirm and illustrate the conditions of incarceration and torture described by former detainees.

