

NYAB Event - Walid Raad "Letters to the Reader"

This event has ended.

The Paula Cooper Gallery presents Letters to the Reader, a major sculptural installation by Walid Raad, in an exhibition scheduled to open on February 27th, 2016 at 534 West 21st Street.

Letters to the Reader is composed of 11 painted and laser-cut wooden panels representing fragments of wall or wall samples. At the bottom of each panel is applied marquetry that suggests parquet flooring patterns. The following text accompanies the installation:

While visiting the recently opened museum of modern Arab art in Beirut, I noticed with great surprise that most paintings on display had no shadows. At first I was beside myself, convinced that religious zealots had destroyed the shadows. But there was no debris. I pondered anxiously whether the shadows had lost their bearings or grip. But I suppose I should have known all along that the shadows were not destroyed nor lost: they had simply lost interest in the walls where they were made to hang. I decided to build new walls on which I carved shadow-like forms—magnets of sorts—in the hope they'd attract the restless shadows. Thus far, not a single catch.

Letters to the Reader was exhibited to much acclaim in the 31st São Paulo Biennial from September to December 2014, followed by two additional venues in Brazil. Other versions of the piece were also shown at the Museum of Modern Art Warsaw (February – August 2015) and the Serralves Foundation in Portugal (October 2015 – January 2016).

The exhibition will also include another installation of Raad's recent photographic and sculptural works.

Both installations further Raad's ongoing art project titled *Scratching on things I could disavow*. With this project and for the past 8 years, Raad has been documenting the building of new infrastructures for the arts in the Arab world. His project has concentrated on the material and immaterial conditions that inflect, alter or color the experience of Islamic, modern and contemporary "Arab" art. Here, his works engage some familiar and peculiar architectural and display features (floors, shadows, frames, walls, views) he's encountered in various historical and imaginary, current and future museums in the Arab world.

Media

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