

Biography / Aalam Wassef

Aalam Wassef was born in Cairo, Egypt in 1970 and lived in France for over 20 years where he graduated from Fine Arts before engaging in his career as an artist and an independent publisher.

His work involves a variety of media and forms of expression, according to time, place and purpose: animation, installation, photography, sculpture, music, songs, drawings, paintings, happenings and video.

From 2006 to 2011 he worked under several identities and signatures, due to the fact that a large part of his work had political implications in Egypt. On February 11th 2011 he "came out", after the fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

Away from the violent topics addressed in his anonymous work, his other pieces revolve around visual and poetic representations of time, memory and the fact of living.

Selected exhibitions / 2007 - 2010

OK Museum for Contemporary Art (Linz, Austria). Parcours West II (La Générale en Manufacture group show, Paris) , Biennale d'Art Contemporain (residency, Dieppe), Galerie Marie Watteau (solo exhibition, Paris), 01SJ Festival – "Art on the edge" (opening performance, San José, USA), Festival Vidéoformes (video, Montpellier), L'Échangeur (solo exhibition, Paris), Parcours West III (La Générale en manufacture, group show, Paris), Pôle M (group show, Paris), Sabotage (group show, La Comète, Paris), We will be heroes (solo exhibition, Cairo, 000-001), Galerie Conradi (with Philip Gaisser).

Upcoming exhibition / 2011

Cracow Museum of Contemporary Art (upcoming group show).

Black Wedding

1 still, 11 blow ups



About

Paris, 2006? New Orleans 1930?
The guests of a baptist wedding
are standing on the street,
singing, parading, glowing.
The photographs I took home
were utterly disappointing.
No vibration, no singing, no
details. The rough and noisy
blow-ups I made of one single
shot, helped restore the stuff
and details this moment was
made of.

2006

Analog photography, digital blow-ups
Epson micro-bubble inkjet print on rag paper
70 x 70 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

eBay Project

8 stolen photographs, enlarged and fixed on tiles - Site specific installation



About

As I browsed eBay, I was taken aback by the contrast between publicity and privacy. Although the context of eBay was strictly commercial and practical, it seemed there was another ongoing narrative, the same narrative one can find in social networks where people attempt to meet other people or simply tell the world that they exist.

The woman in this picture is selling her bra for \$5 dollars. She stands in her bathroom, in front of the mirror. Note that she needs to replace her roll of toilet paper.

Location

La Générale en Manufacture, Paris.

2006

Black bra in good condition

Inkjet prints

30 x 45 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

We Will be Heroes 1/3

Indoor and outdoor hybrid piece - **Location** : Sayyeda Zeinab neighbourhood, Cairo, Egypt.



2009

Mural

Black marker and acrylic. Rhinestone suspension.

800 x 350 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

We Will be Heroes 2/3

Indoor and outdoor hybrid piece - **Location** : Sayyeda Zeinab neighbourhood, Cairo, Egypt.



2009

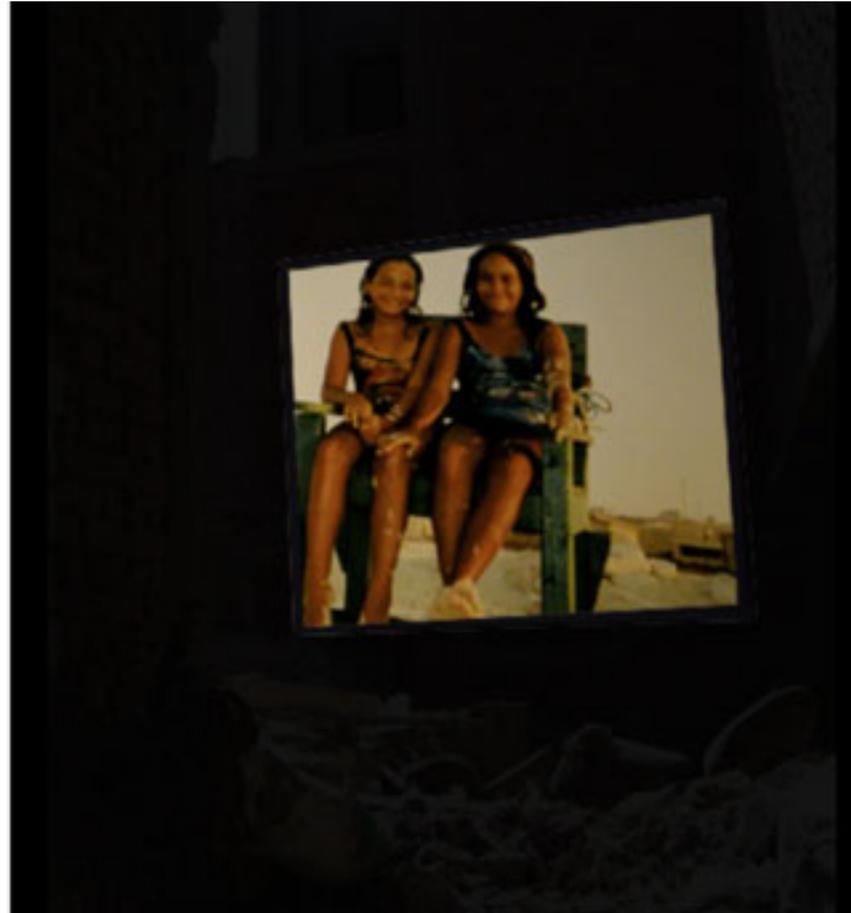
Sheets, rhinestone, wall painting, installation of objects

Variable sizes

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

We Will be Heroes 3/3

Indoor and outdoor hybrid piece - **Location** : Sayyeda Zeinab neighbourhood, Cairo, Egypt.



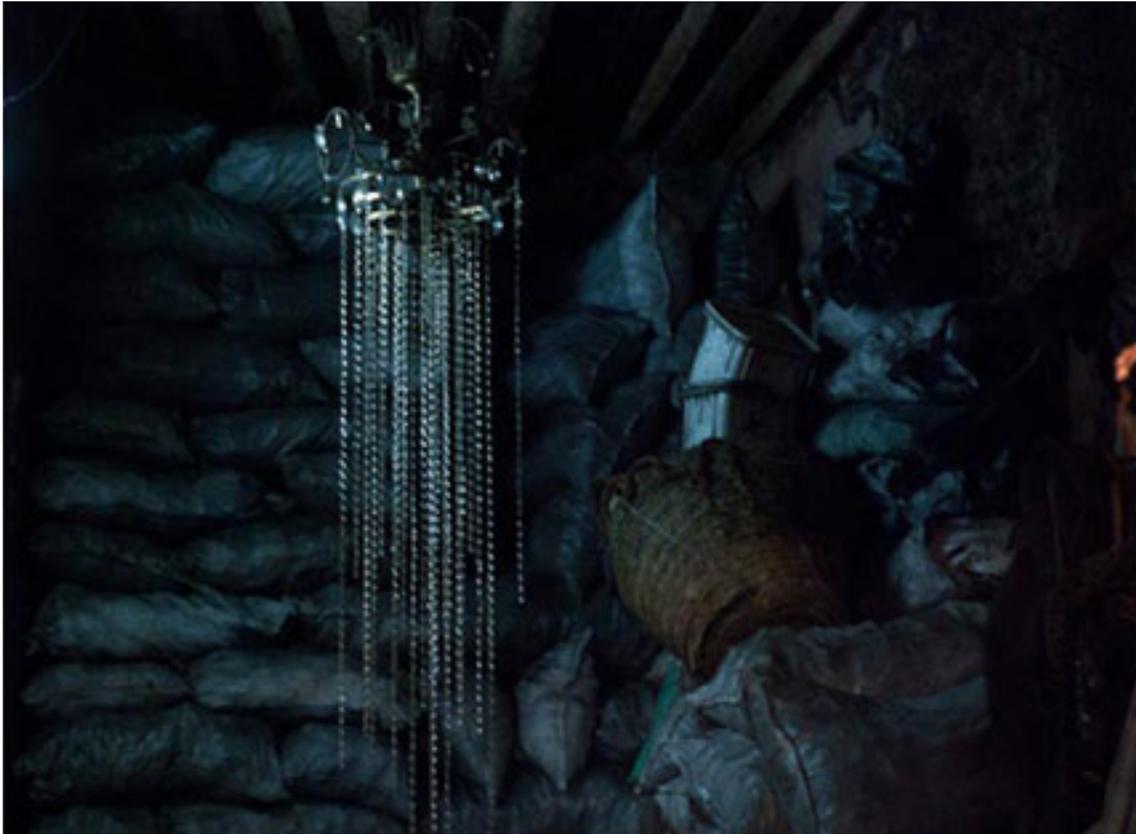
2009

Outdoor video projection in a wasteland
400 x 300 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Not in a million years

Site specific installation - **Location** : Sayyeda Zeinab neighbourhood, charcoal street shop - Cairo, Egypt.



2010

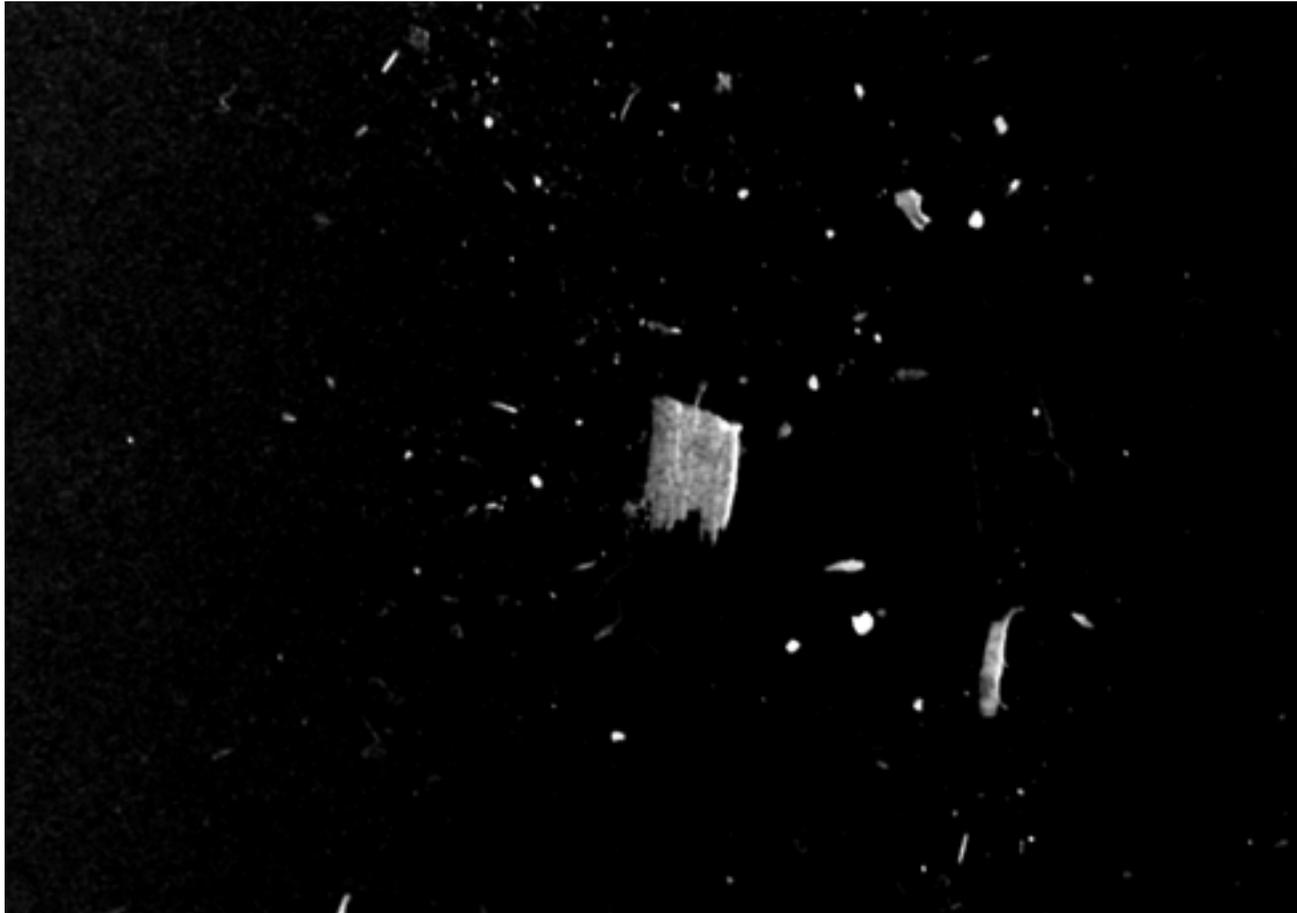
Installation

50 x 500 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

What came out of a 10 year old box



2010

Analog photography, digital scan

16 x 12 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Burning Penelope



2006-2010

Digital photography and drawing

70 x 70 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Eve, Alice and a laptop



2002-2010

Drawing on photo paper, scanned and printed

16 x 24 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

My



2010

Digital photography

Epson micro-bubble inkjet print on rag paper

30 x 40 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Les deux amis



1995-2010

Scanned polaroids

Epson micro-bubble inkjet print on rag paper

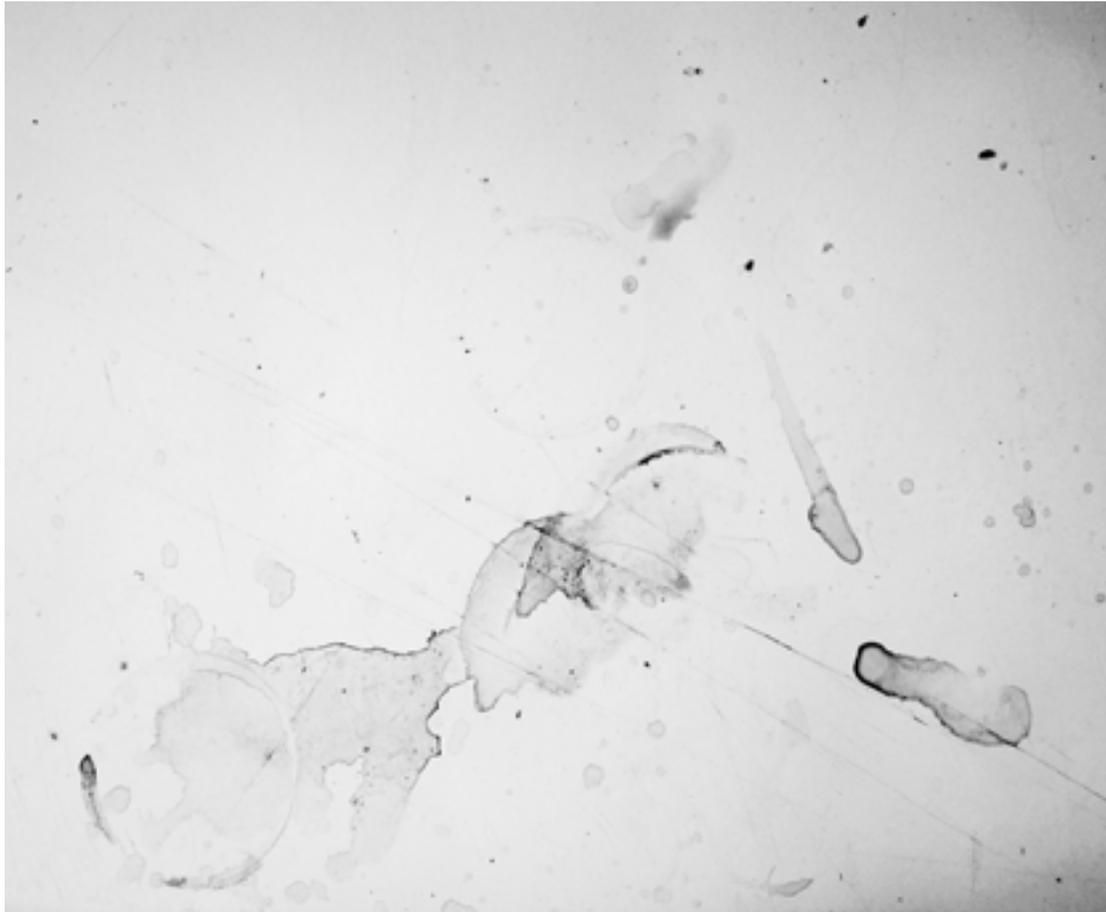
70 x 70 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Ab
Par
The
are
sing
The
we
No
det
blo
sho
this

Time Stamp Collection

Kitchen table



2003-2010

Scanned analog photograph

Epson micro-bubble inkjet print on rag paper

30 x 40 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

30 slides in a jewel box



1997-2010

Slides, jewel box

Cropped digital photograph

30 x 30 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Butterfly



2010

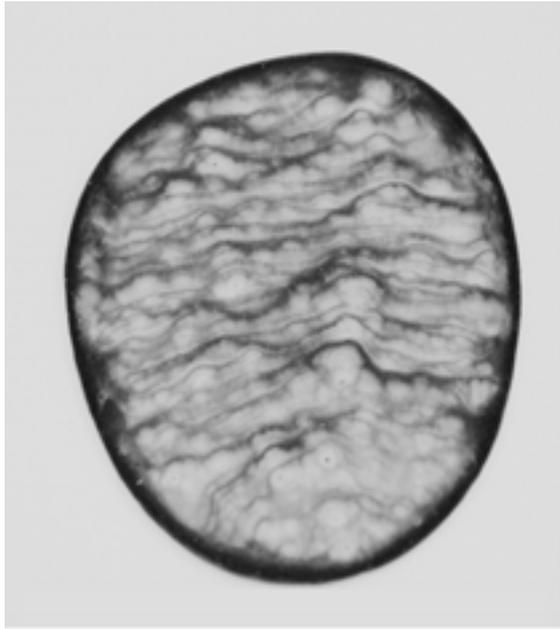
Melted wax on ice

25 x 30 x 20 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Cells or maybe planets



2010

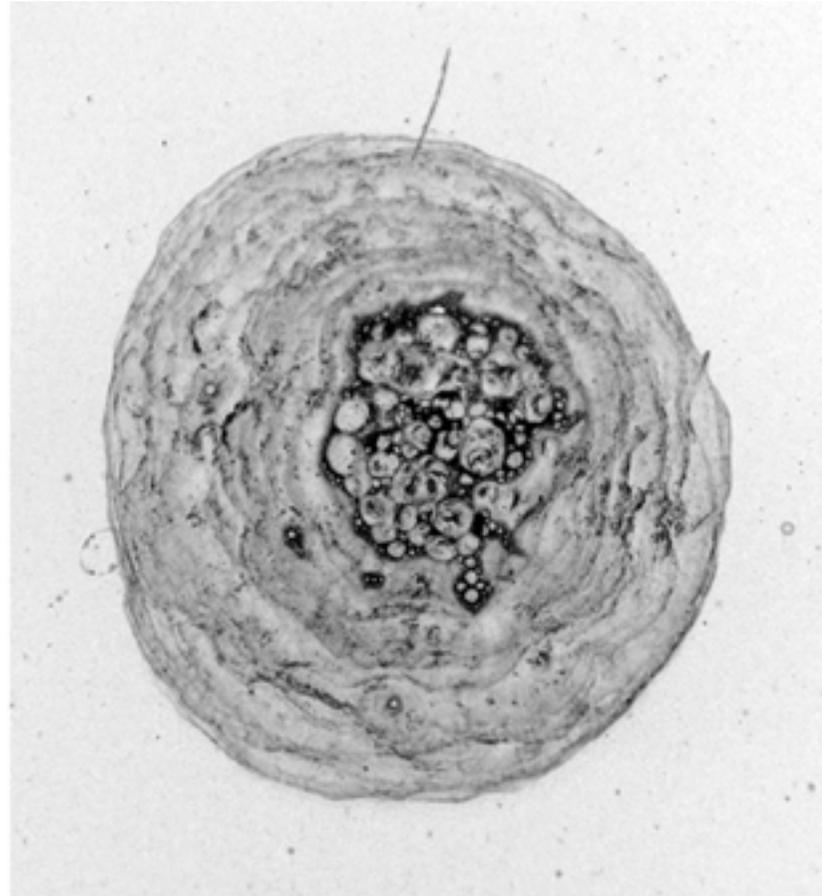
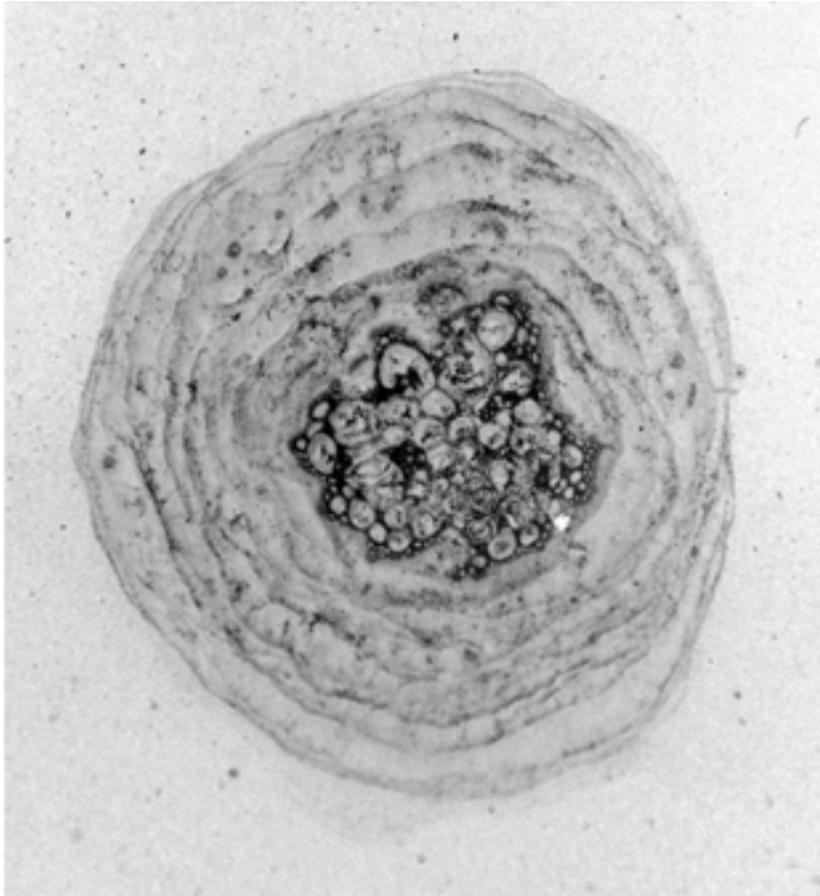
China ink on glass

6 x 6 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Definitely cells, not planets



2010

Reversed digital photographs

China ink on glass

6 x 6 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Kindness

4 acrylic paintings on plexiglas, d'après photographie



Left : Ayatollah Khomeiny
Right : Adolf Hitler

2010

White acrylic and china ink

Plexiglas

150 x 300 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Obama

site specific installation



2008

Stainless steel, laser cuts
150 x 300 cm

About

Portrait of Barack Obama displayed in November 2008, on US election results. This portrait was shown for 30 days in a vespa repair shop, at the very heart of a poor neighbourhood in Cairo.



Visitors looking at *Obama*.

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

When I die, I'll miss Coca Cola - Picturing what I'll forget

videos



2008

Video. 2'30" and 6'
640 x 480 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

Row it down the stream



2010

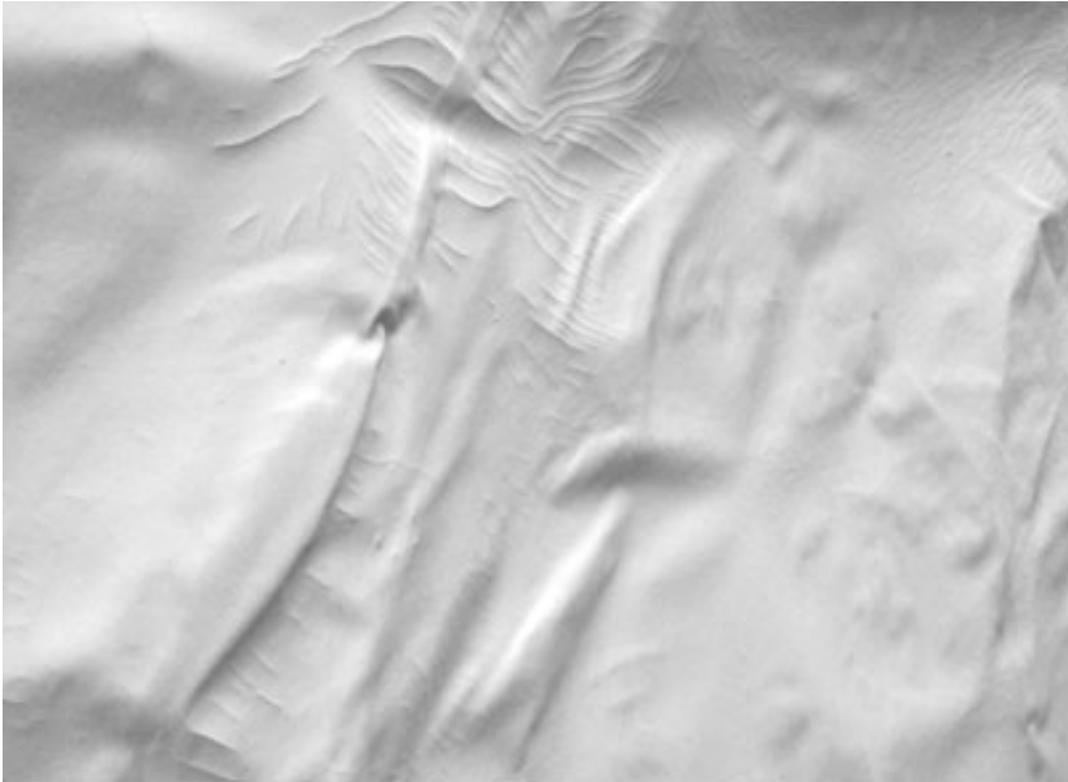
Video, 4'30"

720 x 576 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

painting



2010

Gouache on canvas

220 x 435 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

polaroid installation



2010

Polaroid prints

13 x 166 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

.eivom hcaep ehT



2010

Video installation, loop

Epson micro-bubble inkjet print on rag paper

90 x 120 x 40 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Time Stamp Collection

3 ink paintings on glass



2010

China ink on glass
100 x 100 cm



General view of Galerie Conradi (Hamburg),
featuring an installation by Philip Gaisser.

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Egyptian Postcards 1, 2, 3 and 4

online videos



About

These four videos were the first works I released in 2007 under the pseudonym "Ahmad Sherif". The goal I pursued till 2011 was to expose what Egypt really was, so we could put an end to blind clichés. It has finally appeared to everyone that Egypt was a police state ruled by a ruthless dictator and a corrupt entourage.



2006

15" online videos

850,000 views on Youtube

640 x 480 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

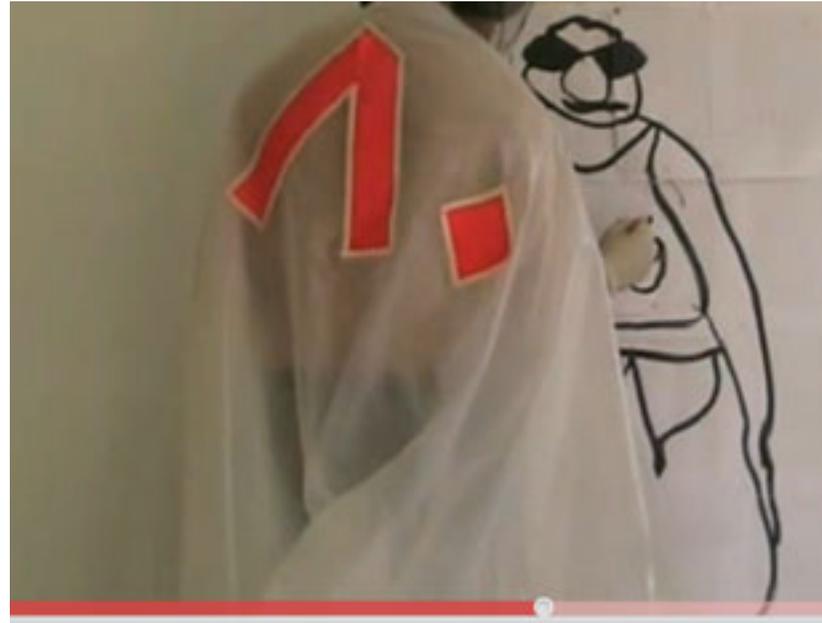
The Tyrant's Cape

online installation and video performance



2007

Plastic sheet, camera stand, chinese sticks,
paper, masking tape, fluo marker
150 x 200 cm



2007

Online video performance
30", 35,000 views on Youtube
640 x 480 pixels

About

Cairo, May 2007, it's President Hosni Mubarak's 80th birthday. For the second time, I invite the Egyptian blogosphere to celebrate the tyrant's anniversary.

The piece on the left is an accessory I used in a video that was widely disseminated on the Internet and in the press. I further put the Tyrant's cape on sale on eBay, for 80 million Egyptian pounds, which corresponded to the size of the Egyptian population at that time.

Blogger in the Palace - In Bed with Hosni

online drawings



2007

Ink drawings on paper
Scanned and inkjet printed
15 x 12 cm and 16 x 13 cm



About

Fantasy. A blogger runs up the stairs of the presidential palace and enters a room where the dictator and his wife are asleep.

Hosni Mubarak for kids

online installation



About

The word written in Arabic says: "corruption".

2006

Toy alphabet

Plastic

30 x 30 cm

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Dictatorships for dummies

online video, posters and stickers



2007

Video with arabic voice over, 1'06"

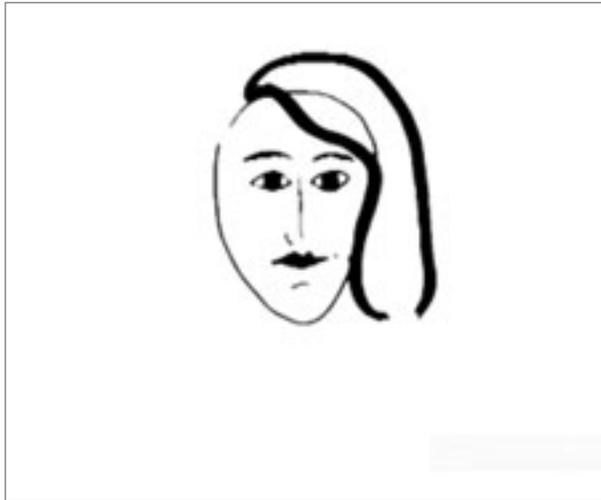
Inkjet prints, stickers

Variable formats

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Free Women, so what

online animation



About

This short animation addresses freedom of faith, way of life, dress and advocates equality between women and men.

2007

Video, 34"

Animated ink drawings

65,000 views on Youtube

640 x 480 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Death in a police station

online video and song



About

This video and song address torture in Egyptian police stations.

The song was also released as a free MP3 file.

2007

Online video, 3'03"

85,000 views on Youtube

Video performance and song

640 x 480 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Sankyoo

online video and song



About

This video addresses the decay and poverty of Egyptian society. It says "Sankyoo" to the president (thank you).

The song was also released as an MP3 file.

Online video, 1'24"

113,000 views on Youtube

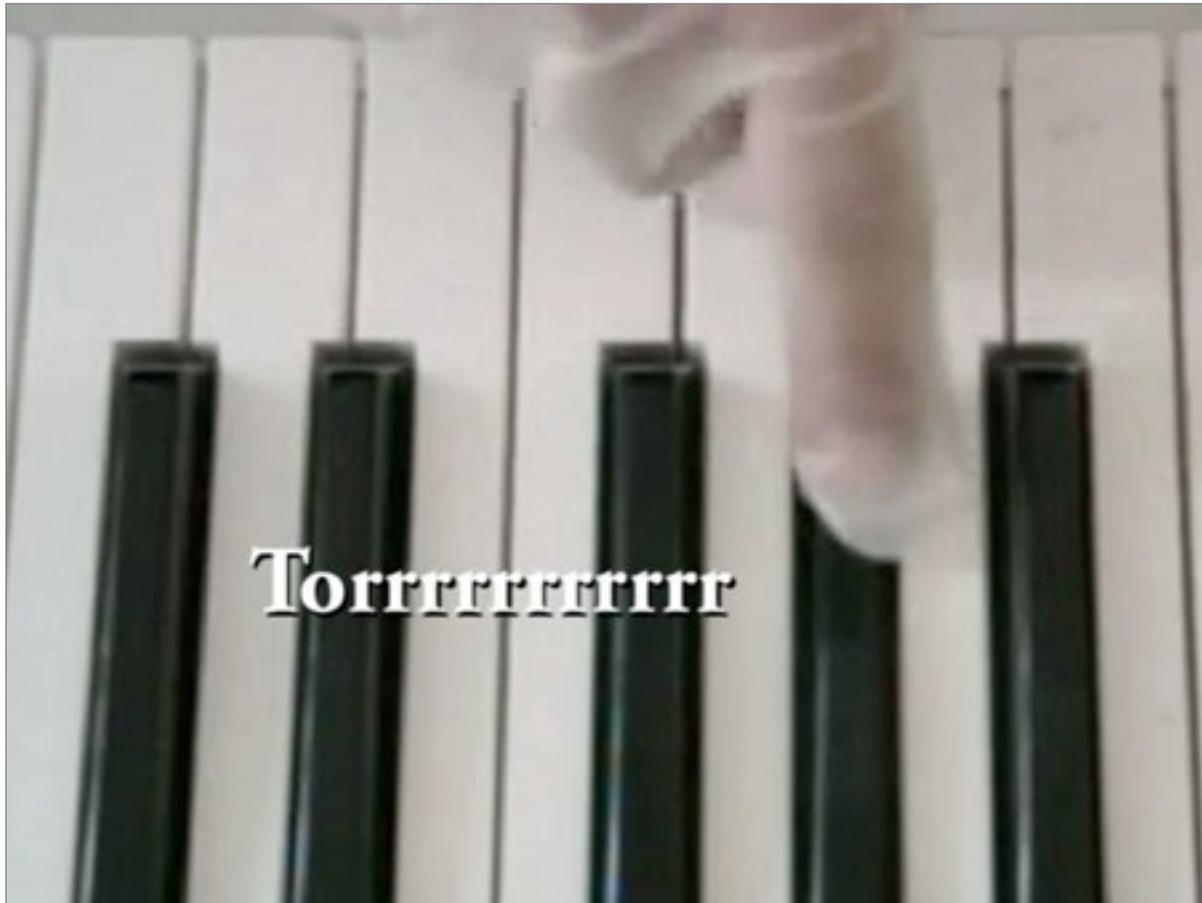
Video performance and song

640 x 480 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Made in Mubarak

online video



About

This video displays a keyboard "made in Mubarak". Each key you press plays one of his favorite words: corruption, humiliation, theft, torture.

Online Video, 32"

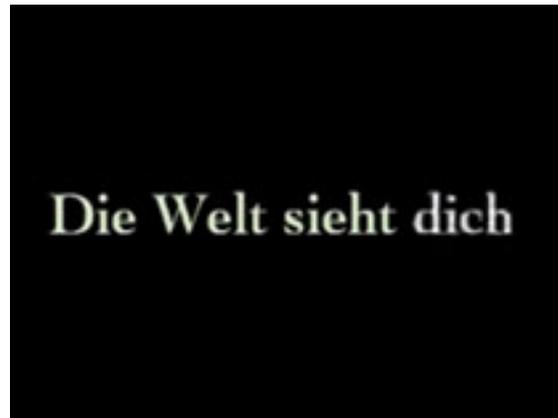
15,000 views on Youtube

640 x 480 pixels

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Actor of the year

online video



2007

51" online video

230,000 views on Youtube

640 x 480 pixels

About

This video reached a very high record of views in a very short time. It was released to denounce a corrupt judgement that was issued by the Egyptian judiciary.

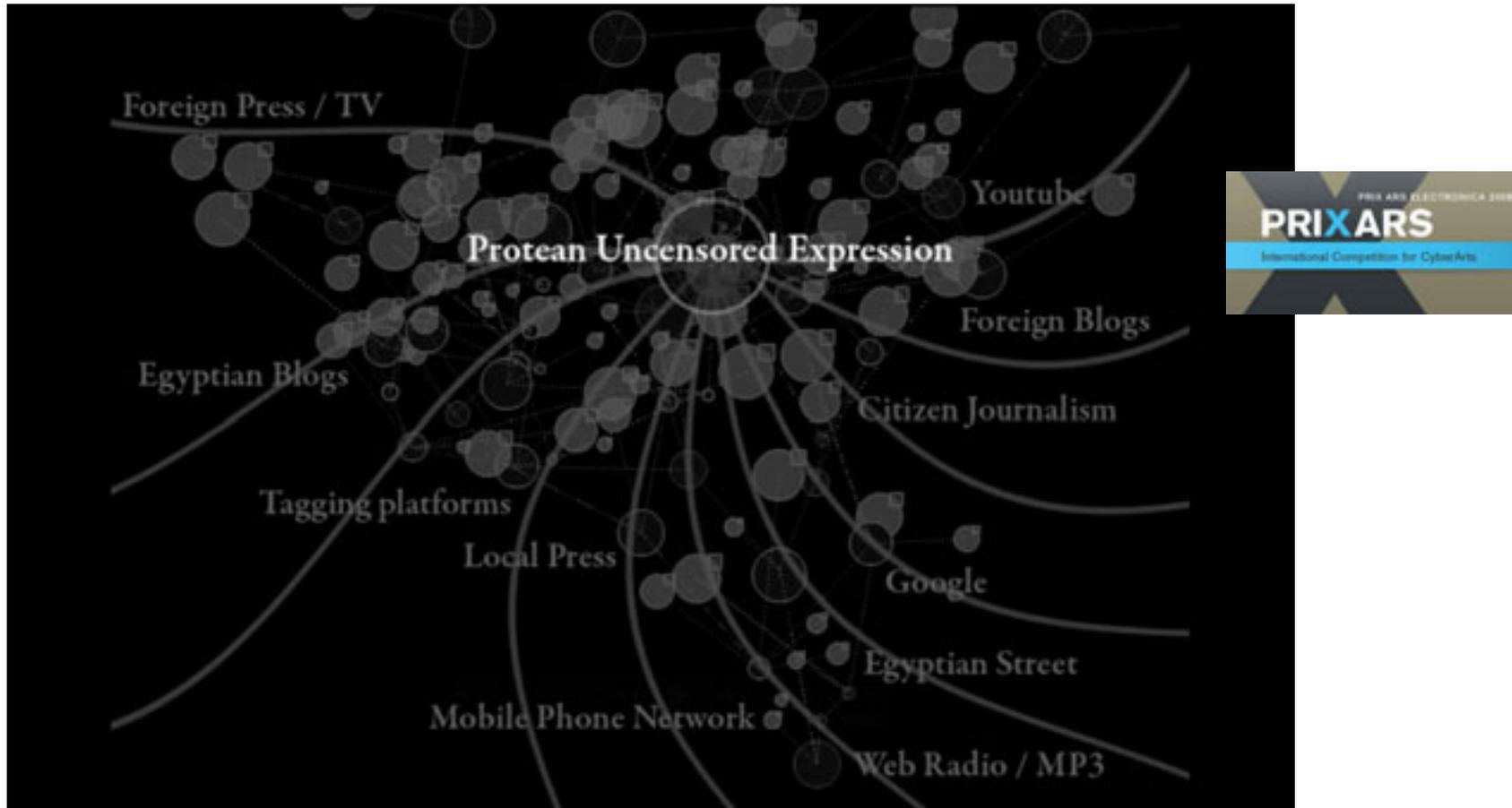
A man had been arrested, raped and torture in a police station. He happened to be filmed while all this occurred, and a cell phone video was released on the Internet. For once, there was visual proof that could be used in a court of law.

The judge's verdict was that the victim was acting and that the video was a fabrication.

Heavy support campaigns occurred at that time and, a year later, the victim won his case and for the very first time, a policeman was sentenced to jail. This video is an audio and video montage mimicking the Oscar awards in which the victim receives the "Actor of the year" award. The last screen is a message to President Mubarak in 5 languages.

Documentary

Available at : <http://www.youtube.com/aalamwassef> - documentation on my work as "Ahmad Sherif"



2008

Documentation presented at OK Museum of Contemporary Art, Linz (Austria)

Ars Electronica Award

Honorary mention for the Hybrid Arts Category

Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces

Links

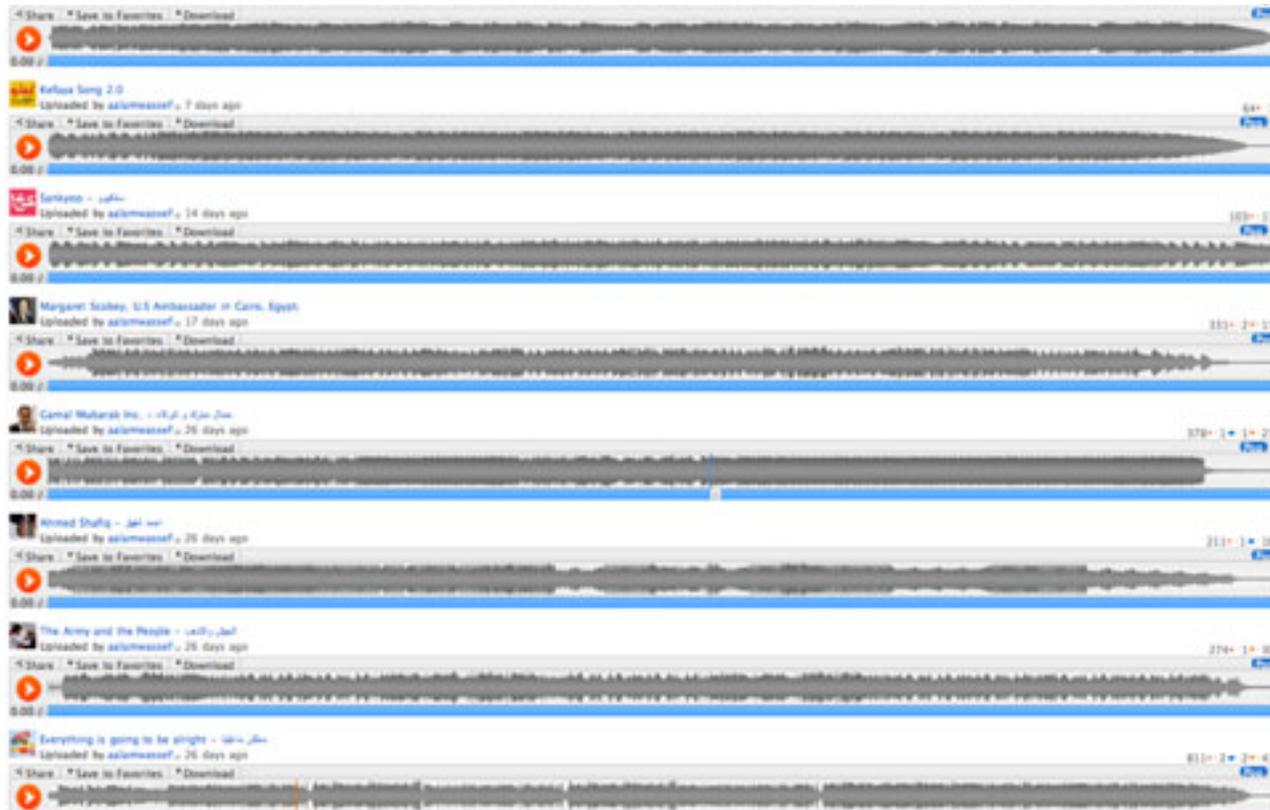
<http://www.soundcloud.com/aalamwassef> - songs

<http://www.youtube.com/aalamwassef> - videos

<http://ahmadsherif.wordpress.com> - videos, songs, happenings

<http://www.youtube.com/ahmadsherif> - videos, songs

<http://crisdegypte.libe.blogs.fr> - articles, songs and videos



Aalam Wassef - Selected Works 1995-2011 - Installations, photography, sound pieces, online performances, hybrid pieces