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THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2023

DALA NASSER

ADONIS RIVER



Photo: Paul Gorra, 2021.

In the fall of 2023, the Renaissance Society presents the first institutional solo exhibition of Beirut- and London-based artist Dala Nasser, featuring a new site-specific commission that responds to the expansive height and volume of the Ren's exhibition space.

As an artist working through abstraction and alternative forms of image-making, Nasser applies an interdisciplinary approach through painting, performance, and film. Her indexical paintings of land, made through direct contact on location, stand in opposition to the sweeping vistas offered by traditional landscape painting. In contrast, Nasser's canvases provide close-up views of the markings of political and environmental erosion and toxicity. Finding meaning in materials and physical processes, Nasser's works examine the deteriorating ecological, historical, and political conditions that result from practices of capitalist and colonial extraction. In a growing body of work that foregrounds the entanglement of human and non-human, she takes the non-human as witness to ecologies of slow violence, colonial theft, and infrastructural failure in times and places where human language has been rendered insufficient or out of reach.

Nasser's project at the Ren centers on the Adonis River (known in modern-day Lebanon as the Abraham River) where the mythical Adonis, the mortal lover of the Goddess Aphrodite, was killed by a wild boar. To this day, the

myths surrounding this river are commemorated in pilgrimages of mourning and grief. Nasser made the paintings for the exhibition inside the cave where Adonis was killed, on fabrics dyed with iron oxide-rich local clay and washed in the river's water. Rather than hanging on walls, these works are configured into three-dimensional spatial environments that evoke the cave and its surroundings, as well as a temple to Adonis.

SAT, SEP 16, 4–7PM

Opening reception
with artist talk at 4pm

SUN, OCT 1, 2PM

Discussion via Zoom
W.J.T. Mitchell and Dala Nasser

WED, OCT 25, 6–7:30PM

Walk-through
Kiersten Neumann and Myriam Ben Salah
*The Renaissance Society and Institute
for the Study of Ancient Cultures*

This exhibition is supported by Maria Sukkar and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

EVENTS

DISCUSSION

W.J.T. MITCHELL AND
DALA NASSERSUN, OCT 1, 2PM
ZOOM

For this virtual program, W.J.T. Mitchell, a leading scholar and theorist of media, visual art, and literature at the University of Chicago, offers his reflections on Dala Nasser's exhibition at the Ren before joining the artist in conversation. Known especially for his work on the relations of visual and verbal representations in the context of social and political issues, Mitchell is the author or editor of many books, including *Landscape and Power* (1994), which Nasser describes as a lasting resource as she thinks about her work.

WALK-THROUGH / TALK

MYRIAM BEN SALAH AND
KIERSTEN NEUMANNWED, OCT 25, 6-7:30PM
THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
AND INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY
OF ANCIENT CULTURES

This shared event between the Ren and the University of Chicago's Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures will put Dala Nasser's exhibition into conversation with the ISAC Museum's ancient Mesopotamian collections, generating new insights into each by exploring such topics as mythological conceptions and practices related to natural materials and intercultural aspects of divinity. Visitors will be led through Nasser's exhibition by Myriam Ben Salah before walking across the University's quad to the ISAC Museum where Kiersten Neumann will present a brief lecture followed by an informal tour and reception in the museum galleries.



Photo: Paul Gorra.



ALEXANDRA PIRICI ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELATIONS

DEC 13–17, 2023

Alexandra Pirici's performative actions unfold over extended durations of time, rather than being conceived as one-time events. Without a clear beginning or end, her live works featuring small or large groups of performers invite you to come back repeatedly and allow for continually changing encounters. At the Ren, over the span of five days, the Romanian artist presents *Encyclopedia*

of Relations, in which six performers continuously reconfigure themselves into various forms and structures while using movement, sound, and language.

As Pirici describes it, this work “embodies interactions between humans, humans and other life-forms, humans and technology; between other animals, between plants, between rocks and waves, between voices, between

seemingly distinct cultural elements, between melodic lines, between bodies in space. In its combinatory logic, it takes inspiration from both biological reality and the fantastic.” First staged at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, within the main exhibition, this work takes a new shape at the Ren as the performers adapt to their surroundings and continue their ongoing catalogue of collective relations.

WED–FRI, DEC 13–15, 4–8PM
SAT–SUN, DEC 16–17, 1–5PM

Intermissions launched in January 2017 as a programming series devoted to performance and other inventive time-based works, all staged in the Renaissance Society's empty gallery in between exhibitions. This recurring platform features two artists every year, supporting live projects of many different forms and durations.

Alexandra Pirici, *Encyclopedia of Relations* at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, “The Milk of Dreams,” 2022. Photo: Eduard Constantin.

CONCERTS



MARJA AHTI

SAT, OCT 21, 8PM
IDA NOYES HALL, 3RD FLOOR THEATER
1212 E 59TH ST

A musician and composer born in Sweden and now based in Finland, Marja Ahti has been a stalwart of the Finnish experimental music scene for more than a decade, working primarily with field recordings, synthesizers, electronic feedback, and digital processing. Her work is rooted in an abiding fascination with the “simple strangeness” of human experiences with sound, and human consciousness more broadly—the notion that vibrations sensed by eardrums can

be experienced as something deeply affecting, even profound, under the right conditions. The resulting compositions create vivid, immersive electroacoustic environments, precise and rich in detail, characterized by slowly warping harmonies and mutating textures.

Co-presented by the Renaissance Society and Lampo.

Marja Ahti, Photo: Sorbus.



LAUREL HALO

SUN, NOV 5, 7PM
BOND CHAPEL
1025 E 58TH ST

Laurel Halo is a composer, producer, musician, and DJ currently based in Los Angeles. Drawing from a range of music lineages, her considered approach has enabled her to maintain a signature aesthetic across a stylistically diverse output, traversing pop, ambient, left-field club, experimental electronica, and film score. Since 2012 she has released a number of albums ranging in genre-fluidity, complexity and scope, including *Quarantine* (2012), *In Situ* (2015),

Raw Silk Uncut Wood (2018), and *Possessed: OST* (2020). At Bond Chapel, Halo’s performance draws from her latest album, *Atlas*, which will be released in September 2023 on her new imprint, Awe.

Co-presented by the Renaissance Society and Experimental Sound Studio.

Laurel Halo, Photo: Norrel Blair.

PUBLICATIONS



KEVIN BEASLEY: A VIEW OF A LANDSCAPE
The most ambitious publication devoted to Kevin Beasley's work to date, *A View of a Landscape* comprises a 300-page book and double LP record. It features contributions by a host of writers and artists, including new essays by Andy Battaglia, Adrienne Edwards, Leon Finley, Mark Godfrey, Thomas Lax, Tiona Nekkia McClodden, and Fred Moten, and new tracks by Laurel Halo, Jlin, Eli Keszler, Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe, Kelsey Lu, Jason Moran, Moor Mother, and SCRAAATCH, among others.



MERIEM BENNANI: LIFE ON THE CAPS
Meriem Bennani's film *Life on the CAPS* is set in a supernatural, dystopian future on a fictional island in the Atlantic Ocean. It offers an electric yet melancholic consideration of life in a state of limbo. This accompanying book—edited by Negar Azimi and Tiffany Malakooti of *Bidoun*—features plentiful images, new essays by Emily LaBarge and Elvia Wilk, and conversations between the artist and Omar Berrada, Fatima Al Qadiri, Amal Benzekri, Aziz Bouyabrine, and the editors.

These and other Renaissance Society titles are available to purchase at:
store.renaissancesociety.org

Coming soon

MAX GUY: BUT TELL ME, IS IT A CIVILIZED COUNTRY?
Contributors include Brit Barton, Matthew Ghoulish, Irena Haiduk, and curator Michael Harrison.

ARIA DEAN: ABATTOIR, U.S.A.!
Contributors include Michael Connor, Bruce Jenkins, Filip Kostic, Evan Zierk, and others.

EDITIONS

All proceeds from Editions sales directly support Ren programs through the generosity of participating artists. Members receive 10% off of most editions.



MERIEM BENNANI
Bouchra Clock, 2023
Edition of 100 + 10 AP
12 in diameter (30.5 cm)
\$125



ÖZGÜR KAR
Death and the Lover, 2023
Screen print on Stonehenge Polar White Paper, 90 lb.
Edition of 20 + 4 AP
16½ x 23¼ in (41.9 x 59.4 cm)
\$500 | \$450 for members at the Publishing Circle level or above

DIANE SEVERIN NGUYEN
"Dark" and "Deprived"
Necklaces, 2023
Silver-plated necklace with red ribbon in a custom velvet jewelry box
Edition of 75 for each necklace
\$65 for one
\$100 for a set of both necklaces
Members at the Publishing Circle level or above receive 10% off this edition



For more new and recent editions by Shahryar Nashat, Ebecho Muslimova, and more, visit store.renaissancesociety.org.

A BOWLING FUNDRAISER FOR THE REN



WED, NOV 15, 7-10PM
HYDE PARK

Please join the team of the Ren and our host committee of seasoned bowlers—

GIAMPAOLO BIANCONI
JIM DEMPSEY
B. INGRID OLSON
JOHN HENDERSON

—for an evening of strikes, spares, suds, and sliders as we raise money for the Ren's exhibitions and programs.

All ticket buyers will receive a Ren bowling shirt and the opportunity to bowl on a team. Lane Sponsors can bring their own teams. Don't bowl? Just join us to watch the competition and cheer on the tournament!

All proceeds from the evening will provide critical support for the Ren's exhibitions, performances, and concerts.

Single Ticket
Includes game for one, Ren bowling shirt, food, beer + wine
\$500

Lane Sponsor Ticket
Includes game for 8, Ren bowling shirt, food, beer + wine
\$3,500

Tickets available at
renaissancesociety.org/events
or by calling 773-702-8670

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SUPPORTERS

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All Renaissance Society publications are made possible by The Mansueto Foundation Publications Program.

MEMBERSHIP

Renaissance Society members form an essential community of support for the new art and scholarship we produce with artists. They value our independence and commitment to fostering ambitious artistic expression and share with us a belief in art's capacity to reflect, challenge, and inspire contemporary thought. Their contributions ensure that our exhibitions and events are all free and open to the public.

Join us from just \$5 a month to get a members-only, artist-designed gift, plus other great benefits.

renaissancesociety.org/membership

VISITING INFORMATION

All exhibitions and events take place at the Renaissance Society unless otherwise noted.

All are free and open to the public.

Follow us on Instagram: @RenSoc

Open hours

Wed and Fri: 12-6pm

Thu: 12-7pm

Sat and Sun: 10am-6pm

The Renaissance Society
5811 S Ellis Ave
Cobb Hall, 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60657

773 702 8670

info@renaissancesociety.org

Closed Mondays, between exhibitions, and Nov 23-24.

Group visits

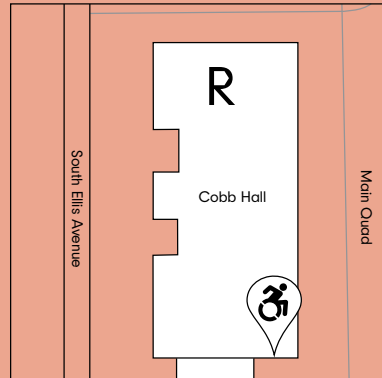
We are pleased to welcome visits from schools, universities, and other groups, and our library and archives are open to researchers by appointment. Please contact us to arrange a visit.

Accessibility

The Renaissance Society gallery is located on the fourth floor of Cobb Hall, reachable by elevator. The building is accessible from sidewalk level via platform lift (marked on the map below). One gender-neutral, wheelchair accessible restroom is available on every floor. Service animals are welcome, and large-print gallery texts and portable seating are available upon request at the front desk.

Physical accessibility details for off-site event spaces may vary. Please check individual event pages on our website for specifics. Further accessibility information is available online at renaissancesociety.org/visit.

For access inquiries, requests, or feedback, please contact Michael Harrison by email at maharrison@uchicago.edu or phone at 773-702-8670.



CALENDAR

SAT, SEP 16, 4PM	Opening reception and artist talk: <i>Dala Nasser, Adonis River</i>	PG 3
SUN, OCT 1, 2PM	Virtual Event: W.J.T. Mitchell and Dala Nasser	PG 10
SAT, OCT 21, 8PM	Concert: <i>Marja Ahti</i>	PG 4
WED, OCT 25, 6-7:30PM	Walk-through: <i>Dala Nasser, Adonis River</i> and Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures	PG 4
SUN, NOV 5, 7PM	Concert: <i>Laurel Halo</i>	PG 5
WED, NOV 15, 7-10PM	Fall Fundraiser: Bowling with the Ren	PG 3
WED, DEC 13, 4-8PM	Performance: <i>Alexandra Pirici, Encyclopedia of Relations</i>	PG 1
THU, DEC 14, 4-8PM	Performance: <i>Alexandra Pirici, Encyclopedia of Relations</i>	PG 11
FRI, DEC 15, 4-8PM	Performance: <i>Alexandra Pirici, Encyclopedia of Relations</i>	PG 11
SAT, DEC 16, 1-5PM	Performance: <i>Alexandra Pirici, Encyclopedia of Relations</i>	PG 7
SUN, DEC 17, 1-5PM	Performance: <i>Alexandra Pirici, Encyclopedia of Relations</i>	PG 8

SEP 16–NOV 26, 2023

DALA NASSER ADONIS RIVER

DEC 13–17, 2023

INTERMISSIONS: ALEXANDRA PIRICI

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

at the University of Chicago
5811 South Ellis Avenue
Cobb Hall, 4th Floor
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renaissancesociety.org

Contemporary art
exhibitions, events,
and publishing