

press release

LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN

2 June – 5 June 2016

performance and book launch: Thursday 2 June 6:30 – 8:30pm

performance at 7:00 pm

Maureen Paley is pleased to announce a solo project by Lawrence Abu Hamdan that will include the presentation of the live audio visual essay *Contra Diction: Speech Against Itself* on the opening evening. The two channel video installation *Contra Diction (speech against itself)* (2015) will remain on view for the next three days.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan is an artist and 'private ear' whose projects have taken the form of audiovisual installations, performances, graphic works, photography, Islamic sermons, cassette tape compositions, essays, and lectures. Abu Hamdan's interest in sound and its intersection with politics originate from his background in DIY music. He is currently a fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School, NYC. In 2013 Abu Hamdan's audio documentary *The Freedom of Speech Itself* was submitted as evidence at the UK asylum tribunal where the artist himself was called to testify as an expert witness. He continues to make sonic analyses for legal investigations and advocacy - most recently his work was prominently part the *No More Forgotten Lives* campaign for Defence for Children International. The artist's forensic audio investigations are conducted as part of his research for Forensic Architecture at Goldsmiths College London where he is also a PhD candidate and associate lecturer.

Contra Diction: Speech Against Itself is a live audio essay employing a series of sonic manipulations and pre-recorded samples to explore the concept and practice of Taqiya. This is a form of communication and political practice forged at remote altitudes, at the fringes of failed states, in buffer zones and on ceasefire lines. Focusing on the stories of alleged mass conversions of the Druze minority in northern Syria by Wahhabi groups Abu Hamdan investigates how such minor speech acts can help us re-appraise the precision of speaking, the multiple ways of remaining silent and the inherently unfaithful nature of one's voice.

Contra Diction (speech against itself) (2015) realises the performance as a two channel video installation in which one of the screens is a teleprompter, the speech apparatus from which the political lie often originates, and formally as a video playback device it symbolizes both duplicity and transparency.

A new monograph [*inaudible*] *a politics of listening in four acts* by Lawrence Abu Hamdan will be published by Portikus and Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen later in 2016 and comprises a series of transcripts of live speech from sermons, monologues, testimonies and interviews made during the course of the last five years.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan was born in 1985 in Anman, Jordan. He lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Earshot*, Portikus, Frankfurt, 2016; *تقيية (taqiyya)*, Kunsthalle St Gallen, 2015; *Tape Echo*, Beirut in Cairo and Van AbbeMuseum, Eindhoven, 2013; *The Freedom Of Speech Itself*, The Showroom, London and *The Whole Truth*, Casco, Utrecht, 2012. Additionally his works have been exhibited and performed at venues such as The Shanghai Biennial, 2014; The Whitechapel Gallery, London; MACBA Barcelona; Tate Modern London; M HKA Antwerp; The Beirut Art Center and The Taipei Biennial, all 2012. Abu Hamdan's writing can be found in Forensis Sternberg Press, Manifesta Journal and Cabinet Magazine.

For further information please contact Simona Zemaityte: simona@maureenpaley.com

The gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday 11.00 am – 6.00 pm and by appointment.
Office opening hours are Monday – Friday 10:00am – 6:00pm