

This is the first major retrospective exhibition devoted to the Egyptian-Canadian artist of Armenian origin, Anna Boghigian (Cairo, 1946). It brings together for the first time an extraordinary body of notebooks, drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures as well as some spectacular large-scale installations. Boghigian's graphic works are anti-aesthetic and dionysiac because they privilege an immediate and emotional form of verbal and visual communication, contrary to an academic style linked to a notion of classical, apollonian beauty.

Everything Boghigian makes is a book, whether it looks like a book or not. From the start of her career in the 1980s until the present, she has made artist's books. After her first bound volumes, like *ZYX-XYZ*, 1981-86, the pages opened outwards like a leporello and then became series of single drawings reminiscent of film frames. At the Sharjah Biennial in 2011 and at dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, in 2012, the notebooks were incorporated into installations, along with architectural structures and walk-through environments. Like giant pop-up books, space is experienced as continually folding and unfolding. *Unfinished Symphony*, 2011-2012, and *The Salt Traders*, 2015, on display here, are a form of the expanded book and intellectual resistance, offering visitors a direct and bodily experience that is the antithesis of the remote, mediated life typical of the digital age. Experiencing one of her works today is like turning and reading the pages of a book in which we also become characters, entering a world folded in on itself; illuminated by extraordinary flashes of insight.

The daughter of an Armenian clockmaker, Boghigian studied political science and art at the American University in Cairo in the 1960s. She then moved to Canada in the early 1970s, studying art and music in Montreal. She has traveled all her life, constantly going from place to place, thus expressing an urgent need for a cosmopolitan culture well before the advent of globalization.

An empathetic observer of the human condition, Boghigian offers us a unique interpretation of contemporary life, between past and present, poetry and politics, joy and a critique of the modern world. Her artworks sing and celebrate a nomadic and suffering humanity, victim of History and its conflicts.

While keeping her studio and home in Cairo, Boghigian lives and works in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Winner of the Golden Lion for the best pavilion (Armenia) at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015, she also took part in the traveling exhibition "Contemporary Arab Representation" in 2003 and in the 11th and the 14th Istanbul Biennial in 2009 and 2015.

The exhibition is curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Marianna Vecellio.

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with [Sharjah Art Foundation](#) in Sharjah (UAE), where it will run from March 16 to June 16, 2018.

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