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ARTS & CULTURE

Four nights of experimental film and video

The International Festival of Film and Creative Video opens at ALBA

Daily Star staff
Tuesday, May 06, 2008



Preview

BEIRUT: Compared to other towns on the eastern Mediterranean coast, Beirut often seems like a clearinghouse of festivals. More of these are dedicated to the moving image, whether film for video art, than any other medium. The International Festival of Film and Creative Video: New images in movement (known by its French-language acronym, FIFVC) is among the newest of these gatherings, certainly the one with the longest name.

The brainchild of Ricardo Mbarkho, a Lebanese video artist and instructor at ALBA (the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts), FIFVC is a sort of festival of festivals or, more accurately, a festival of curators. Rather than programming a selection of film and video art, Mbarkho's team invites a selection of institutional and freelance curators from around Europe and Lebanon to select works for screening and discussion.

As its title suggests, FIFVC's participants are interested in experimental film, video and new media art - a catch-all phrase signifying various technologically mediated forms, ranging from conceptual to virtual art, performance to installation, that may use computer graphics and animation, the internet, interactive technologies or robotics.

FIFVC's 2008 guest list is wide and varied. The festival opens Tuesday evening with a pair of screening-presentations featuring Per Platou and Alfred Rotert.

Platou is a Norwegian multi-media artist and curator. Among the several creative hats he wears is director of the Production Network for Electronic Arts in Norway (PNEK), which facilitates the production of electronic art in that country. His lecture, "Media Art in Norway Today," will be illustrated by video art generated in his country between 1993 and 2007, both before and since PNEK's founding in 2000.

Rotert is the head of EMAF, the European Media Art Festival. Regarded as one of the most influential forums of international media art, EMAF attracts artists, curators, gallery-owners and specialist audiences for its yearly overview of experimental film, installations and the like. His presentation, "Alone amongst friends," is a collection of international video art works (many of them prize-winners), that appear to have all been made in 2005 and 2006.

For the balance of the week, FIFVC will present a bouquet of talks, screenings and a roundtable discussion addressing matters of new media and video art in the global context.

"Stirrings Still" is a program of art videos from Spain curated by Ricardo Echevarria. "Seasonal Cuts," a selection of Dutch video art, is co-curated by independent curator Nat Muller and Bart Rutten - whose several gigs include curator at the Stedelijk Museum and adviser at the Impakt festival.

On the third evening of the festival, ALBA professor Ghada Waked will present her lecture "Des morts a la crie," an essay about photojournalistic practice in Lebanon during the summer 2006 war, and specifically the compulsion Lebanese felt to display the bodies of their slain children on camera.

Romano Fattorossi, the founder of Milan's INVIDEO (the International Exhibition of Video Art and Cinema and Beyond), will present "Beyond the mimetic image. The wabi-sabi image. Original characters and search of identity." A lecture on representational and non-representational film, it will be followed by a selection of international short films screened at INVIDEO from 1988 to 2007. Lebanon's own "... Ne. a Beyrouth" festival will then screen highlights from last year's edition of the festival.

Abdo Nawar, Lebanese theater and film director and administrator of the SHAMS art collective, will discuss the impact of digital tools upon the creative process with his talk, "Artist, grab the Multimedia." Dieter Wiczorek, director of Paris' Festival International Signes de Nuit, will precede a screening of a selection of his festival's shorts with the talk "The cultural potentialities of cinematographic and audiovisual production: what it is and what it could be." - **The Daily Star**

FIFVC runs from May 6-9 at the Auditorium of ALBA, the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts, in Sin al-Fil. Sessions runs from 6-11:45 p.m. For more information, call +961 1 480 056 or see www.fifvc.com

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