

Son Don't Rush To Be A Man
Pascal Hachem

Selma Feriani Gallery is delighted to present *Son, Don't Rush To Be A Man*, a solo show by Lebanese artist Pascal Hachem.

Living in Beirut, Hachem has been working for the last decade in response to his everyday life experience and shifting conditions. His body of work is commonly described as highly politicised, taking on bold issues through provocative installations, objects and performances.

The present exhibition brings together new and equally challenging works that attempt at a critique of social constructs such as manhood and masculine identities and their consequent violence. A violence that French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu termed as symbolic, one that is “imperceptible and invisible, even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely mis-recognition), recognition, or even feeling.”*

Motionless, modest yet powerful, the works on display articulate a tension, a contradiction, rendered through the displacement of meaning and the playful combination of opposite materials. A saw blade and a stack of natural stones are coupled with glass tubes (*Culminating Point*, *Trip Over*, *One to Seven*), a book is emptied of its content (*Commercial World*) and an old hand mirror is intentionally made non reflective (*Son, Don't Rush to be a Man*).

The tension at stake is that of a metamorphosis, of a key change that occurs within channelling apparatuses. It is the moment a kid becomes a man, a moment that is as radical as the creasing of paper (*Mood No.I* and *Mood No.II*).

For this new project, Hachem steps back from mechanised devices to linger over handmade and very banal objects transformed into contemplative specimens.

Located in the gallery's open-air patio, *Cache-Cache* is a headstone marble bearing the inscription “I am”. The top is covered with a loose black cover that hints to the fragility of self-representation and the absurdity of conditioning systems. The same ideas are to be found in *Confidential*, a set of varied tools coming out of envelopes, and *Spanking*, a circular Pyrex glass tube carrying brass letters which read the Arabic word for “learn”.

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Other works in the exhibition seem to be more concerned with the concept of time and the artist's self representation. *Jeux de Cartes* consists of a series of engraved Perspex boxes fixed to a white board. Some of the boxes reference different stages in the artist's life while others are missing information.

The work *36.576 Meter* gives another take on Hachem's personal history. The piece features 40-yard white sleeves made out of one fabric and rolling over a stick, like a reel unfolding the artist's life course.

Hachem is born in the late seventies. He grew up during the civil war whose mention tends to be implicit or even absent in his works. Unlike post-war Lebanese artists working primarily with the documentary and the archive, Hachem ultimately belongs to a different generation engaging with new subjects and formal experimentations.

*Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

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