

laid out like a stage, with much of the action revolving around an office desk with a telephone on it, next to which three LED screens installed on the wall offer text-narrations to accompany the sound recordings of singers performing the artist's script.

As a whole, Hamadeh's opera seeks to destabilize the certainty—or finality—attributed to judicial law by challenging the validity of legal testimony. Structured around 10 murders, the script that unfurls over the LED screens takes viewers through a process of unravelling, in which forms of accepted truth are challenged with a level of absurdity that

exposes the irrationality of certainty itself. The first murder is defined as “a call cut short,” “a command from a lord,” and “the theft of land”—with the LED script offering different roles that might apply to whoever is defining the murders themselves, such as “commentator,” “demonstrator,” and “violinist.” The ninth murder is pinned to “a Voice that Kills,” which leads to the 10th murder, stated simply as “the Phonic—the voice AS the killer.” In this dramatic climax, everyone becomes implicated in a world where nothing is certain, and yet everything appears dangerously defined.

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SALZBURG  
Museum der Moderne

## Anna Boghiguian

Review  
Christoph Chwatal

July 26 –  
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A painted sail dissects the narrow atrium of the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, (aka the Rupertinum), encouraging the viewer to wander around and take in a view of the early Baroque space. Anna Boghiguian's *Trade + Birds* (2018), a canvas sail, was specifically devised for the space and produced in an on-site studio. Exceeding the duration of the exhibition, the work will remain on display for an entire year. It evokes a ship and, in keeping with this metaphor, the exhibition set out to take us on a journey to explore entangled histories of trade and slavery from antiquity to modern times. *Trade + Birds* unveils present-day manifestations of global trade and migration through painted maps, graphs, and text—recurring issues in the Egyptian-Canadian artist's sprawling practice. A series of “birds” (painted plaster, wax, and mull objects) hangs from the ceiling and is accompanied by an eponymous short essay, written by the artist during her stay in Salzburg.

This presentation follows a retrospective at Castello di Rivoli, Turin (September 19, 2017 – January 7, 2018), and her first institutional solo show in the United States at New Museum, New York (May 2 – August 19, 2018).

Boghiguian's exhibition in Salzburg brings together various bodies of work from previous shows. Among them, *The Salt Traders* (2015) was initially conceived for the 14th Istanbul Biennial. The work, prominently installed in a long gallery, features a shipwreck in pieces, as if shattered and distributed about the space, and is accompanied by the sound of the sea. According to the narrative the artist develops, an ancient wreck of a salt trader's ship is excavated in a future beset by global warming. After one of the hottest summers in Salzburg's recent history this narrative seems, today, all the more timely and trenchant. A painted sailcloth, hung from the ceiling, displays a map including a marked spot in the

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Anna Boghiguian,  
2018, *Promenade dans  
l'inconscient* [photo: Rainer  
Iglar; courtesy of Museum  
der Moderne, Salzburg]



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Anna Boghiguian, *A Myth*,  
2018 [photo: Rainer Iglar;  
courtesy of Museum der  
Moderne Salzburg]

Indian Ocean, where the Roman salt traders' wreck was purportedly found. The gallery is laid out with white fabric and alternating piles of sand and salt. Eight upright wooden structures hold small frames, variously filled with salt, drawings, newspaper articles, paper cutouts, and beehives. Together, these elements expose the entangled histories of imperialism, slavery, and trade, from antiquity through 20th century decolonization and the intensifying of global trade.

In the 1960s, while attending the American University in Cairo, Boghiguian wrote about Hegel's concept of the slave-master dialectic, which he developed in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. After completing her degree in political science, Boghiguian moved to Canada to study art and music. Many of the rooms

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*Alexandria*, installation  
view, 2017 [photo: Renato  
Ghiazza; courtesy of the  
artist and Castello di Rivoli  
Museo d'Arte Contemporanea,  
Rivoli-Turin]



are accompanied by musical pieces, including a piano composition by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Apart from musical composition and poetry, painting is key to Boghiguian's work, and it recurs in a multitude of her “supports,” including books, stage-like sets, and collages. *Promenade dans l'inconscient (A walk through the unconscious)* (2016) consists of about 30 paper cutouts (and various other materials) mounted on thin metal sticks, each on a wooden base. In the work, Boghiguian creates a procession within a theater-like setting. In the adjacent gallery, her 2013 work *A Play To Play* takes inspiration from Indian poet, playwright, and artist Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and India's decolonization struggle, and is connected to Boghiguian's travels through that country. Her work often takes the form of notebooks and painted diaries, in response to her experiences and research.

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Anna Boghiguian, *Trade  
+ Birds*, 2018, installation  
detail [photo: Rainer Iglar;  
courtesy of Museum der  
Moderne, Salzburg]



With poetic sensitivity, these intimate views also reflect the artist's singular approach to translating historical accounts. This quality is perhaps best demonstrated in a series of painted artist's books, shown in the same room with collages and paintings related to Nietzsche and the Egyptian-Greek poet Constantine Cavafy. Historical photographs of Alexandria, digital printouts from city tours around Salzburg, a pomegranate, and woolen thread are positioned next to lumps of wax and pigments. On the second floor, the installation *The Studio* (2017) combines everyday objects taken from the artist's studio in Cairo, where she returns after extended periods of travel. The exhibition manages to foreground the artist's unique translation of historical accounts and interpretation of present-day perspectives, while creating space for poetic encounters.