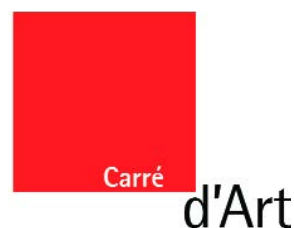




## **PRESS KIT**

### **RAYYANE TABET FRAGMENTS**

**CARRÉ D'ART-NÎMES. APRIL 12 - SEPTEMBER 22, 2019**



Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes

## PRESS KIT

# RAYYANE TABET

## *FRAGMENTS*

**Carré d'Art-Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes**  
**Exhibition from April 12 to September 22, 2019**

**Curator: Jean-Marc Prevost**

### **Summary**

The exhibition

Publication

Biography of the artist

Images

Rayyane Tabet at Musée du Louvre and Metropolitan Museum, New York

Practical Informations

Upcoming Exhibitions

High resolution visuals and press kits can be uploaded from the Press section of our website:  
<http://carreartmusee.com/fr/espace-presse/>

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## PRESENTATION OF THE EXHIBITION

FRAGMENTS explores an archeological dig led by Max von Oppenheim, a German diplomat and ancient historian, in Tell Halaf, Northeast Syria, at the turn of the 20th century. It brings together works that evolved through presentations in Marrakech, Paris, Berlin, Rotterdam and Hamburg. Against the backdrop of complex contemporary geopolitics, Tabet reconstructs the material remains of the Tell Halaf temple, tracks stone reliefs scattered in museums around the world, and assembles carpet fragments; raising questions on the survival of heirlooms, the preservation of archeological artifacts, cultural appropriation, museological practices, and migration patterns. FRAGMENTS includes a performance, drawings, sculptures, personal belongings and ready-mades which, together, become a multifaceted large installation. Following the deconstruction and reconstruction of remains through the accidents of history, across time, generations and continents, the show draws on autobiographical notes and self-directed research, to explore stories that offer an alternative understanding of major events through individual narratives.

It all begins with a spy story: In 1929 Tabet's great-grandfather, Faek Borkhoche, was appointed by the governing authorities of the French Mandate stationed in Beirut as Max von Oppenheim's secretary to gather information on the excavations the latter was conducting in the village of Tell Halaf in Syria. At the time, the German government needed detailed maps of North Africa and the Levant for a possible military attack there. Since these territories were under British and French rule, mapmaking had to be done covertly. Intelligence officers were sent on mock ethnographic and archeological expeditions to acquire the needed information from the area of interest. Von Oppenheim was suspected to be one of these officers, as the French knew that he had been coming back to the same location on the border between Syria and Turkey for the past 30 years and were afraid that he was radicalizing Bedouin tribes and preparing an undercover coup against colonial powers. In reality, von Oppenheim had accidentally discovered parts of a Hittite temple in 1899, and was more interested in Tell Halaf for its archeological remains. He had been going back since to uncover the entire complex. Following the division of finds with the French authorities, the material that remained in Syria was transported to Aleppo and formed the foundational endowment of the National Museum of Aleppo, which opened its doors in 1931. Upon his return to Berlin, Oppenheim tried to place his portion of the finds in the Pergamon Museum but was unsuccessful in doing so. Undeterred, he opened his own private Tell Halaf Museum in an abandoned factory building in Charlottenburg and started writing about his expeditions. In 1943, during one of the nightly bombing raids on Berlin, the building and most of the objects were destroyed. Only the large statues made of basalt stone survived the fire. But after firefighters doused the flames, the sudden temperature change between the cold water and the hot stone shattered the artifacts. Despite logistical difficulties, the director of the Museum of the Ancient Near East in Berlin managed to get the shattered fragments crated on behalf of von Oppenheim. In August 1944, 27,000 basalt fragments were brought to the cellars of the Pergamon Museum. After reunification in 1990, a group of conservators were allowed to access the fragments and in 2001 they began reconstructing the façade of the temple of Tell Halaf based on von Oppenheim's notes. When Tabet's great-grandfather died in 1981, he had nothing of value to leave behind, except a rug made from goat hair that had been given to him by the Bedouins of Tell Halaf back in 1929.

### PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by the second edition of of *Fragments*, a catalog, thought by Rayyane Tabet and published by Kaph Books.

Texts by Rayyane Tabet and Jean-Marc Prevost in

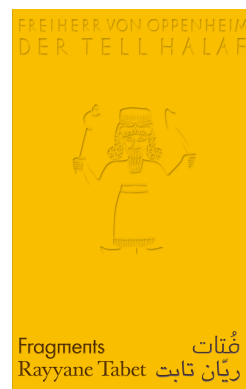
English / French / Arabic

312 pages, linen cover and embossed

This publication was made possible with the support of Sharjah Art Foundation



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION



## THE EXHIBITION

All works : Courtesy of the artist & Sfeir-Semler Gallery Beirut/Hamburg

**OBJECTS BELONGING TO FAEK BORKHOICHE**, 1929-1937, Book, photographs, letter, postcard, envelope, notecard, contract and various paraphernalia, Dimensions variable

Faek Borkhoiche (1895-1981) was a Lebanese schoolteacher, translator and Tabet's great-grandfather who was assigned by the governing authorities of the French Mandate stationed in Beirut to be Max von Oppenheim's secretary and gather information on the dig he was conducting in Tell Halaf in 1929. The little material documenting his six months-long stay are displayed in this vitrine. Alongside this material is Max von Oppenheim's *Der Tell Halaf* book, which Faek received as a present in 1932, a postcard from the Tell Halaf Museum he received in 1937 and paraphernalia that connects the two figures which hints to the fact that the two stayed in touch long after the expedition ended.

**AH, MY BEAUTIFUL VENUS!**, 2017, 6.5 tons of basalt, wooden trestles, foil pressings, shipping documents, 200 × 1300 × 500 cm overall dimensions

The installation comprises of 6.5 tons of black basalt tiles, imported from a quarry in Swaida, southern Syria. It is the same volume of the stone that constituted the original Tell Halaf Venus: a statue that became the emblem of the Tell Halaf expedition and was the centerpiece of Max von Oppenheim's Museum. Displayed on sculpture stands are foil pressings made from von Oppenheim's mold of the original Venus, which was cast upon the discovery of the seated goddess in 1911. This mold was used by the conservators at the Pergamon Museum as a guide for the reconstruction of the shattered original. The fragmented presentation of the sculpture refers not only to its destruction and painstaking reassembly, but also to the scattering of cultural artifacts through violent moments in history. Navigating shifting trade embargos, the stone tiles themselves trace contemporary narratives of conflict and material present in the sculpture. Their troubled trajectory across national borders is represented by the inclusion of shipping documents.

**BASALT SHARDS**, 2017, 1000 charcoal on paper rubbings, wooden pallets, Dimensions variable

In 1943, during one of the nightly bombing raids on Berlin, Max von Oppenheim's Tell Halaf Museum and most of the objects inside were destroyed; among them were artifacts made from basalt stone that shattered into 27,000 fragments. A reconstruction project started in 2001 at the Pergamon Museum where the shards were kept in storage. Since then, 25,000 pieces have been reassembled. 2,000 fragments were unable to be identified or matched against any object and still remain in storage. As part of the Artists-in-Berlin residency program of the DAAD, Tabet gained access to the material while working with Dr. Nadja Cholidis and Dr. Lutz Martin, two of the main researchers involved in the conservation work of the Tell Halaf artifacts. By making rubbings of the unidentified shards, Tabet emphasizes the material traces of the loss of cultural heritage that might never be recovered while simultaneously proposing that a different form might emerge from the unidentified remains.

**EXQUISITE CORPSE**, 2017, Military tents, maps, genealogical tree, books, Dimensions variable

The installation is made of several single-soldier-tents used by Germany, Russia, France and the United States in various ground offensives in North Africa, the Levant and the Gulf throughout the 20th century. They showcase the adoption and evolution of a simple square-shaped design introduced by the German army in 1899, which bears a striking resemblance to a classical Bedouin jacket called "bisht" that can be transformed into a single-person- tent by using two wooden poles. Between 1939 and 1968, Max von Oppenheim published an ethnographic study of Bedouin tribes in 4 volumes. Tabet includes in the installation these books alongside the genealogical tree of a Bedouin tribe and the maps of their movements in summer and winter derived from von Oppenheim's publication. With this, Tabet not only emphasizes the accidental connection between von Oppenheim's archeological endeavors and a historical case of cultural appropriation, but also confronts two fundamentally different concepts of society: objects that have come to symbolize colonial interventions, and traces of migration patterns and tribal links that negate the common conception of borders and nation states.

**GENEALOGY**, 2016 – ongoing, 12 goat hair rug fragments, 11 linen pieces, paint on wall, Dimensions variable

When Tabet's great-grandfather died in 1981 he left behind a rug made from goat hair that had been given to him in 1929 by the Bedouins of Tell Halaf while working there as Max von Oppenheim's secretary. It was his wish that the 20-meter rug should be divided equally among his five children with the request that they, in turn, divide it

among their children and so on and so forth until the rug eventually disappears. As of today, the rug has been divided in twenty-three pieces across five generations. Tabet borrowed several of the fragments from his relatives and used linen replicas for the pieces where a loan was not possible. The work reflects on the tradition of family heirlooms as shared stories by way of a metaphor that extends from a genealogical tree to an abstract mathematical composition.

**ORTHOSTATES**, 2017 – ongoing, 32 framed charcoal on paper rubbings, vinyl on wall, 107 x 77 cm each

During Max von Oppenheim's initial excavation at Tell Halaf in 1911, he discovered along the back wall of the palace a sequence of 194 orthostates. The slabs had been carved in low relief. They alternated between black basalt and red-painted limestone to form a narrative frieze of imagery including animals, plants, deities, and scenes from daily life. One hundred years later, several are now lost, destroyed or divided among several museums worldwide. During his residency in Berlin, Tabet started an ongoing project to make rubbings of the existing and available orthostates. So far, he has managed to copy twenty-four of the fifty-nine owned by the Pergamon Museum in Berlin and the four that are held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. A complete list of the 194 orthostates is presented above the framed rubbings, and highlights their current location, material, and the motif depicted on them.

**KOPF HOCH! MUT HOCH! UND HUMOR HOCH!**, 2017, Ink on linen, Montblanc® limited edition pen and packaging 95 x 2300 cm. Elie Khouri Art Foundation.

In 2009, to honor Max von Oppenheim's work and legacy, the Hamburg based company Montblanc® issued a limited-edition pen under its "Patrons of Art" label. The edition consisted of 4,810 pens with 18k gold and 925 sterling silver with "engraved Bedouin motifs paying homage to Oppenheim's passion for the tribes of the Arab world". Tabet used one of these pens to write "KOPF HOCH! MUT HOCH! UND HUMOR HOCH!" on a large linen banner. The sentence can be translated as "CHIN UP! GOOD LUCK! AND KEEP SMILING!", which was von Oppenheim's motto and advice to whomever will be in charge of putting together the shattered artifacts from Tell Halaf—emphasizing his unbroken optimism despite seeing his life's work being destroyed.

**DEAR VICTORIA**, 2016 – ongoing, Reading performance, 30 minutes

**The performance will be activated by the artist himself on the opening day (and on other dates to be announced on the museum website) and then by mediators trained by the artist.**

The main wall text of this exhibition is a transcript of a reading written and performed as the project evolved through presentations for the 6th Marrakesh Biennial; at the Galeries Lafayette Foundation in Paris; in the storerooms of the Pergamon Museum and at the daadgalerie in Berlin; in the Galleries of Ancient Near East Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam; during Act II of Sharjah Biennial 13 in Beirut; at the Kunstverein in Hamburg and at the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Rayyane Tabet (b. 1983, Achqout, Lebanon) lives and works in Beirut. He received a Bachelor in Architecture from The Cooper Union in New York and a Masters in Fine Arts from the University of California in San Diego. He has had solo shows at Kunstverein in Hamburg (2017), daadgalerie, Berlin (2017), Witte de With center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2017), Museo Marino Marini, Florence (2016) and TROUW Amsterdam (2014). His work was featured in Manifesta 12 (2018), the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018), the 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017), the 32<sup>nd</sup> São Paulo Biennial (2016), the 6<sup>th</sup> Marrakech Biennale (2016), the 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Biennial (2011 & 2015), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Museum Triennial (2012).

He is the recipient of the Emerging Artist Award of the Sharjah Biennial (2011), the Jury Prize of the Future Generation Art Prize (2012) and the Abraaj Group Art Prize (2013).

He is represented by Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg / Beirut.



*Dear Victoria, 2016-ongoing*



*Ah, my beautiful Venus!, 2017*



*Basalt Shards, 2017*



*Exquisite Corpse, 2017*



*Genealogy, 2016-ongoing*



*Orthostates, 2017-en cours*



*KOPF HOCH! MUT HOCH! UND HUMOR HOCH!, 2017*

# RAYYANE TABET – 2019

## MUSEE DU LOUVRE

Rayyane Tabet will be in the exhibition

### « Forgotten Kingdoms Heirs of the Hittite Empire »

from May 2, 2019 to August 12, 2019 (Hall Napoléon).

Curator: Vincent Blanchard.

The Hittite empire, a great rival power of ancient Egypt, ruled over Anatolia and held sway over the Levant until about 1200 BC. Its demise gave rise to Neo-Hittite and Aramean kingdoms in modern-day Turkey and Syria, heirs of the political, cultural, and artistic traditions of the fallen empire. The exhibition invites visitors to rediscover the mythic sites of this forgotten civilization, such as the majestic remains of the Tell Halaf site, located near the current Turco-Syrian border.

This major Syrian heritage site was discovered by Max von Oppenheim, who conducted excavations there from 1911 to 1913. The large sculptures, which adorned the palace of the Aramean king Kapara, were brought back to Berlin where they were exhibited, then very heavily damaged in WW2 bombings. An incredible conservation project carried out in the early 2000s made it possible to rehabilitate them.



Photo of excavation of Tell Halaf site  
© Fondation Max Freiherr von Oppenheim /  
Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, Cologne.



[www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr)

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## METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

« Rayyane Tabet/Alien Property »  
From October 30, 2019 to February 23, 2020



[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

## PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

Open from Tuesday to Sunday included from 10 AM to 6PM.

Carré d'Art–Musée d'art contemporain. Place de la Maison Carrée. 30000 Nîmes  
Tel.: + 33 (0)4 66 76 35 70 - Email : [info@carreartmusee.com](mailto:info@carreartmusee.com). Website : [www.carreartmusee.com](http://www.carreartmusee.com)

### Admission Fees

Entrance to temporary exhibition + permanent collection + Project Room: full fee: 8 €; reduced fee\*: 6 €  
Entrance to permanent collection + Project Room: full fee: 5 €; reduced fee\*: 3 €

1st Sunday of the month

temporary exhibition only - full fee: 8 €; reduced fee\*: 6 € / Permanent collection + Project Room: free

\* reduced fee\*: those eligible include groups of more than 20 people, people seeking employment, students (upon presentation of written proof), members of the association Amis des Musées de la Région Occitania (Friends of the Museum of the Region of Occitania).

FREE ADMISSION (upon presentation of written proof): see <http://carreartmusee.com/fr/infos-pratiques/>

Guided Tours: Leaving from the reception hall of the Museum, level + 2

(fee, added to admission fee): 3€

#### **Individuals**

- Every Saturday and Sunday at 4:30 PM
- During April school vacations, every day at 4:30 PM
- From July 6 to August 31, every day at 4:30 PM
- The first Sunday of each month, guided tours at 3PM and 4:30 PM (included in the entrance fee)

Groups not affiliated with schools: By appointment only. Contact Sophie Gauthier (04 66 76 35 74)

Atelier d'Expérimentation Plastique (Experimental Art Workshop):

*For children from 5 to 12 years of age, by appointment. Contact: Sophie Gauthier (04.66.76.35.74)*

**Individuals** (fee: 5 €) from 2PM to 4PM some Wednesdays and during holiday periods.

**Groups** : From Tuesday to Friday, by appointment. For rates see <http://carreartmusee.com/fr/infos-pratiques/>

### Collective Family Workshop

Open to all, free for old and young from 2PM to 4PM on April 24, May 15, June 5 and September 11, 2019. Participation possible without prior registration, on the first floor of the Carré d'Art museum.

### Adult Workshops

(fee: 5 €) From 10AM to 1PM on May 11, 18, 25 and June 8, 15, 22.

Registration required; classes meet at the atelier of the Carré d'Art museum. No minimum level of skill required.

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## Centre de documentation en art contemporain, Level -1

From Tuesday to Friday, from 1PM to 5PM; in the morning by appointment

Saturday from 10AM to 1PM and from 2PM to 5PM.

04 66 76 35 88 - [documentation@carreartmusee.com](mailto:documentation@carreartmusee.com)

Online catalogue: <http://carreartmusee.centredoc.fr/opac/>



## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

### RENCONTRES D'ARLES

As part of the Rencontres de la Photographie, in the summer of 2019, Carré d'Art will host three exhibitions. The program is being created in tandem with the Director of the Rencontres. It will take up the Carré d'Art's Galerie Foster, the Project Room space and the Chapelle des Jésuites in Nîmes. Other partners might participate in the project in Nîmes (the Library, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, other museums...), thus creating an itinerary through the city for the public.

#### **30 Years after – ART COLLECTION TELEKOM – Project Room, Carré d'Art (July 2 – November 10)**

Art Collection Telekom was created in 2010. The focus is on contemporary art from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Art Collection Telekom sees in it an answer to the social and political changes that took place after the fall of the Iron Curtain and a call for a better understanding of the great cultural diversity of Europe through the visual arts. All mediums are represented from photography to installation, drawing and new media. The acquisitions are mainly devoted to young artists with the desire to follow their work over several years.

The works therefore constitute an ideal basis for communication and the exchange of ideas and reflect the way Telekom sees himself: "LIFE IS SHARING". Contemporary art offers the opportunity to see the world in a different light. An adventure that requires openness and impartiality to trust one's own thoughts. The constitution of the Telekom art collection is overseen by an internal board and coordinated by Antje Hundhausen, Raimund Schmolze and Margret Fischer. Curatorial advice by Nathalie Hoyos and Rainald Schumacher.

The Nîmes exhibition brings together a large selection of artists from the collection, mainly using the photographic medium. It is presented as a cartography that highlights the geopolitical changes and the questions they raise in these different countries but more generally in Europe.

**Petra Feriancova, Petrit Halilaj, Ion Gregorescu, Igor Grubic, Aneta Grzeszykowska, Sejla Kamerić, Eva Kot'atkova, Vlado Martek, Ciprian Muresan, Vlad Nanca, Paulina Olowska, Dan Perjovschi, Agnieszka Polska.**

<https://art-collection-telekom.com/>

#### **DANIEL G. ANDUJAR-Galerie Foster, Carré d'Art (June 6 – November 3)**

Visual artist, theoretician and activist, Daniel G. Andújar (Almoradí, Alicante, 1966) lives in Barcelona. He questions the media and the strategies used by the new means of communication by highlighting the desire for control under appearances of transparency and the failures of democratic access to data. It intervenes in the public space as in cultural institutions but also in a concern for efficiency invests virtual spaces. In a critical step, he analyzes the social and power relations present in different spheres of society and how new technologies have transformed them just as they have altered our experience of reality. At the last Documenta he presented the project *A Disasters of War*. This important work was centered on the representation of conflicts, the ideas of nationality, public space, looting of cultural property, falsification and truth.

At Carré d'Art will be presented *Leaders* (2014), an installation in which photographs where political leaders are manipulated, their image being put at the service of trade and advertising.

## PETER FRIEDL

October 25, 2019-March 1st, 2020

Peter Friedl uses different mediums, drawings, photographs, installations and films. His work focuses on representations that summon power, gender, narrative, identity, language and history. For him, images always contain blind spots, and the works he proposes manifest tensions between personal and collective history. The exhibition will highlight his interest in literature and theater, which are fictional spaces that allow us to approach reality in another way. Three important works of the artist are part of the collection of Carré d'Art.

Peter Friedl was born in 1960 in Austria. He currently lives in Berlin. He has had important solo exhibitions at the MACBA in Barcelona, the Kunsthalle Basel, Witte de With in Rotterdam and has participated in several Documenta and biennials. In the spring of 2019 an important solo exhibition, Teatro, will open at the Khusnthalle in Wien and he will be presented at the Sharjah Biennale with a new production.