

EXHIBITION GUIDE 17/03/–27/05/2012

YOU
ARE
MONA
STILL
HERE
HÂLA BURADASIN

ARTER

EXHIBITED WORKS

3-D Cities

2008–2010

A Bigger Splash

2009

Baid Ghanam[sheep's testicle]
(Jerusalem)

1996

Bunker

2011

Carcasses

(Baalbeck)

1998

Daybed

2008

Deep Throat

1996

Garfish (Bequia)

1996

Globe

2007

Grater Divide

2002

Hair Grids

With Knots

2006

Hair Receiver

2012

Jardin Public

1993

Kapan

2012

Keffieh

1993–99

Measures of

Distance

1988

Misbah

2006–2007

Natura morta

(medical cabinet)

2012

Present Tense

1996

Projection (cotton)

2006

Roadworks

1985

Shift

2012

Silence

1994

Sprague Chairs

(DOWN TOOLS)

2001

Testimony

1995–2002

Undercurrent (red)

2008

Untitled

(chinese colander)

1996

Untitled

(flat colander)

1996

Untitled (grater)

1996

Untitled

(milk stainer)

1996

Untitled

(shaker colander)

1996

Untitled (rack)

2011

Van Gogh's Back

1995

Worry Beads

2009

You Are Still Here

(Arabic version)

2006

"You Are Still Here" is a comprehensive survey of Mona Hatoum's work that focuses on the last two decades of diverse production through which the artist has determinedly explored a sense of the malaise and unsettledness that permeates our contemporary world where even the most familiar can no longer be considered safe. The exhibition aims at making meaningful quotations to allow a viewing experience that unfolds the larger framework of the social and political contexts in her work.

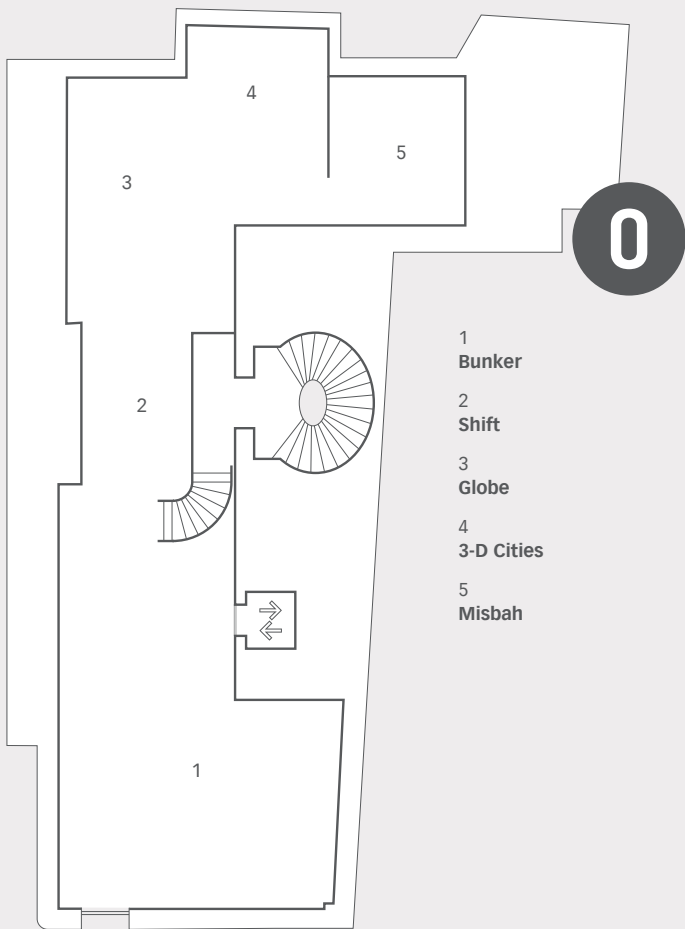
Hatoum's *oeuvre* is dedicated to a persistent investigation of a broad range of issues related to home and displacement, closeness and distance, loss and separation, surveillance and regimentation by institutional power structures, the endangered and violated human body. Her work is an unrelenting exploration of the contradictions and complexities fostered by the state of the world today. By following strategies of unexpected juxtapositions of several formal and visual elements, she creates paradoxical layers

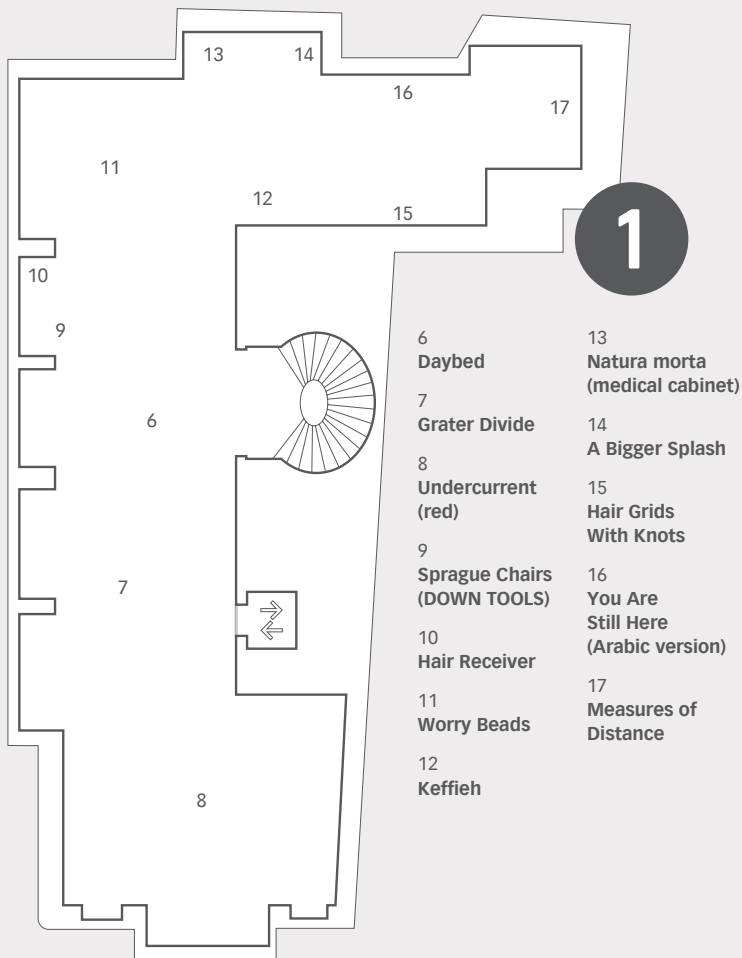
of meaning and tackles dichotomies in her works that are always finely tuned to generate implications rather than rigid statements. Her clever manipulation of materials and scale prompt a multitude of associative references, providing certain flexibility in the cognitive and sensory experience of each viewer.

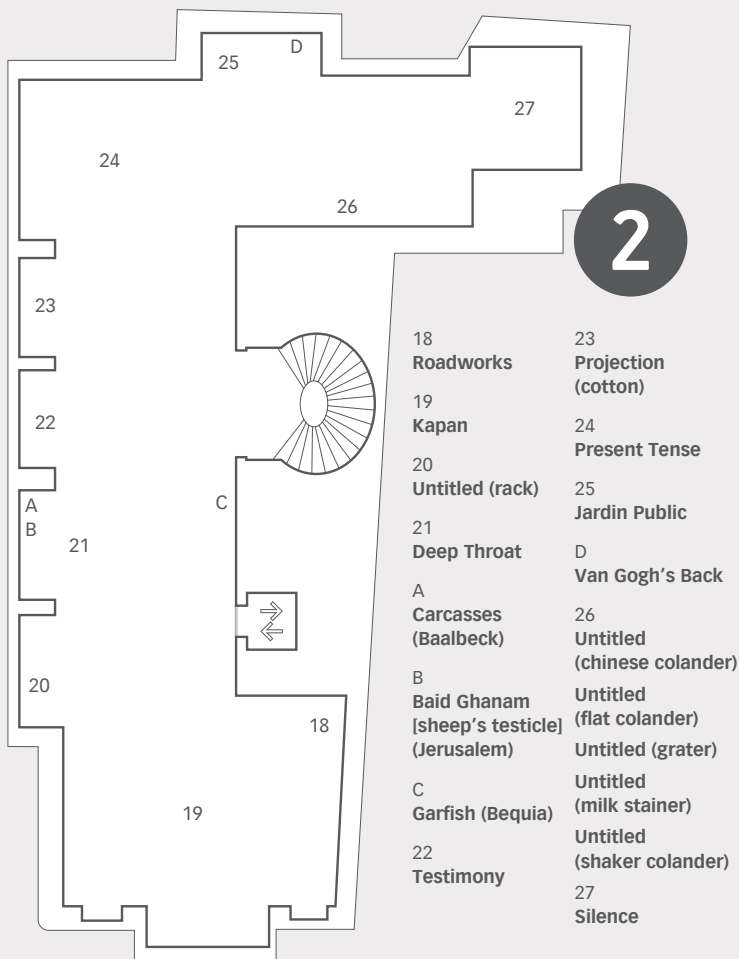
The exhibition at Arter borrows its title from one of Mona Hatoum's works, *You Are Still Here*, which dates back to 1994 and was translated in a second version into Arabic in 2006. *You Are Still Here* abounds with associations of place and time, both remaining equivocal when you attempt to grasp them.

After attending one of her exhibitions, the late Palestinian scholar Edward Said summed up Hatoum's work saying: "a lot of sentiment but no sentimentality". This delicate, yet often hard to achieve balance has always been secured in Hatoum's work through methods and strategies that sen-

sitise the viewer on physical and mental levels without using clear narratives. Inspired in part by a personal history, the topography of Hatoum's work, which has been shaped over almost three decades, has always maintained its own idiosyncrasy rather than referring to any specific geography or history. The territory covered by her work remains simultaneously foreign and familiar to all, with ever shifting borders starting from skin, expanding to that of home, transcending political ones. No matter how many boundaries you traverse, you are still here and your own safety is at your own risk.







Bunker (2011)

Bunker is a modular installation that consists of twenty-two steel structures that are architectural in shape, and which appear like schematic, derelict buildings. For this exhibition, Hatoum has selected a group of six modules out of the original set of twenty-two and has arranged them in a particular configuration to suit the gallery space. Each 'building' is made up of stacked steel rectangular tube sections that have been subjected to cutting and burning giving them the appearance of buildings that have been scarred by war. Although *Bunker* appears to be an imagined cityscape, and generic in form, many of the structures refer specifically to buildings from Hatoum's native Beirut. The installation's maquette-like scale seems to suggest plans for a future construction project in which signs of destruction are already present.

2

Shift (2012)

Shift is one of the works in the exhibition that makes reference to the local context and was produced in Istanbul. Consisting of a wool carpet that depicts a world map overlaid with yellow seismic rings, the work seems to suggest that the whole world is a potential danger zone. The carpet has been sliced up into sections that have shifted in such a way that the topographical integrity of the image it depicts is destroyed. Alongside its associations with the globally threatening environmental challenges of our day, the work depicts the whole world as a potential shooting target that could be aimed at and destroyed at any moment.

3

Globe (2007)

This cage-like globe is approximately the size of a person's average height and tilts at the same angle as the earth. With steel bars woven together in the manner of medieval window bars, the sculpture looks like a heavy cage that is about to roll. In this work, the globe is stripped of all its geographical and political borders to create a minimal space of imprisonment, large enough only for one.

4

3-D Cities (2008–2010)

3-D Cities is a trio of printed paper maps of Beirut, Baghdad and Kabul mounted on to tables that are linked by wooden trestles. Hatoum has cut out sections from each map with delicate crater-like concentric circles that either recede downwards or project outwards from the surface, as if marking the locations of some kind of seismic disruption or areas that have been affected by bomb blast as well as building sites where new architectural structures are being erected. Riddled as these cities are with conflict, Hatoum's beautifully crafted positive and negative incisions imply the impacts of war, where the forces of destruction and reconstruction are manifest.

5

Misbah (2006–2007)

'Misbah' is the Arabic word for lantern. Here, one of Hatoum's recurring motifs —the soldier figure—is replicated as a decorative cut-out on a brass lantern. Like a child's magic lantern, the environment is transformed when the lantern rotates, creating explosive and vertiginous shadows of soldiers and stars on the gallery walls.

6, 7

Daybed (2008)

Grater Divide (2002)

Hatoum often takes innocent domestic objects and turns them into threatening sculptures by scaling them up to human proportions. Two examples in the exhibition are *Grater Divide* and *Daybed*. *Grater Divide* is based on a Victorian fold-out cheese grater that has been scaled up to the size of a room divider or 'paravent', giving it the surrealism of something with monstrous dimensions. Similarly, *Daybed* is based on a cheese grater with elegant curved ends. With typical dark humour, Hatoum has made a sculpture that has enlarged the form of the grater to the size of a bed that instead of sleep and rest, promises discomfort and pain.

8

Undercurrent (red) (2008)

Undercurrent (red) is a large square tapestry woven from bright red cloth-covered electrical cables, whose long ends curl out to form a wide circle on the floor. At the end of each tendril of cable is a light bulb that glows bright and then dim as if breathing with unnerving regularity. Although *Undercurrent* is an elegant and precise floor-bound work, it is unaccountably unsettling, perhaps

due to the way its initially tight, contained structure seems to unravel and spread, moving out across the floor like a pool of blood or the arms of a hungry animal.

9

Sprague Chairs (DOWN TOOLS) (2001)

The series of works entitled *Sprague Chairs* was created in 2001 at Mass MoCA in North Adams, a museum housed in the old Sprague electrical factory. Each of the works use two metal stools that belonged to the workers in the now defunct factory. The stools have been 'sewn' together seat-to-seat with copper electrical wire, rendering them unusable. Each pair spells out a different inscription, such as 'redundant', 'dismissed', 'down tools' or 'laid off', that reflects the history of the factory and the massive dismissal of its workers.

10

Hair Receiver (2012)

Hatoum often uses found objects in her work. This small glass and wood cabinet was discovered by the artist at the Çukurcuma antique market during her site visit to Istanbul. She has used it to display a collection of hairballs similar to those that have made their appearance in several works since 1995 such as *Recollection* and *Hair Necklace*.

11

Worry Beads (2009)

In this work, Hatoum once again plays with the scale of an object, this time, enlarging a rosary and casting the beads in metal so that they end up looking like cannonballs. Used to aid prayer and meditation in several religions, or to gain ease of mind in times of worry or stress, this contemplative prayer instrument begins to resonate with associations of war and destruction when it is expanded to a spectacular size and weight in Hatoum's work. Despite the gentle curves it draws reclining elegantly on the floor, *Worry Beads* is not a calm and peaceful object at all.

12

Keffieh (1993–99)

Keffieh is based on the traditional Arab headscarf with its distinctive black and white pattern. In this work, Hatoum has embroidered the pattern using long strands of human hair creating a strange and surreal object that is full of contradictions.

13

Natura morta (medical cabinet) (2012)

In *Natura morta* (meaning 'still life' in Italian), Hatoum has reproduced the forms of hand grenades in colourful, mirrored, Murano glass. These decorative and seductive objects with their forms reminiscent of sensual fruit, are ambiguously poised between something deadly and explosive and something alluring and tactile. Displayed in a minimal medical cabinet, they are presented as precious objects with sinister connotations.

14

A Bigger Splash (2009)

A Bigger Splash borrows its title from a famous painting by David Hockney and was inspired after Hatoum visited the glass workshops on the island of Murano. In this work, a group of small glass sculptures, taking the form of droplets of liquid caught in motion, sit on the gallery floor. However, rather than depicting the cool splash of water so famously depicted in Hockney's painting, the vivid red colour of this work suggests the exaggerated spilling of blood.

15

Hair Grids With Knots (2006)

Hatoum has frequently used organic materials in both her drawings and sculpture work, in particular human hair. In *Hair Grids With Knots*, Hatoum has knotted together and woven individual strands of hair to create a delicate and abstract work. Here the artist has chosen to use an unstable and organic material in order to make a precise, minimal grid; creating a three dimensional drawing whose order contradicts the material structure of its own composition.

16

You Are Still Here (Arabic version) (2006)

This work is the second version, translated into Arabic, of a mirror piece Hatoum originally made in 1994 where the English sentence is inscribed on a standard, portrait-format wall mirror. The Arabic version uses stylised calligraphy with ornaments that give it a decorative and elegant character. When the viewer faces the mirror, they are reminded of their mortality and yet forced to acknowledge their existential reality.

Measures of Distance (1988)

The video is concerned with the artist's separation from her Palestinian family and in particular, her relationship with her mother. It is constructed from a series of grainy stills of Hatoum's mother shot in extreme close up while in the shower of her family home in Beirut. The images are overlaid with a mesh of Arabic writing, like a curtain or a veil that was taken from the letters the artist received from her mother while living in London. The soundtrack consists of an animated conversation between Hatoum and her mother overlaid with Hatoum's voice-over, reading a translation of her mother's letters into English.

Roadworks (1985)

Roadworks is the video documentation of a performance where Hatoum walked barefoot through the streets of Brixton dragging a pair of large boots attached to her ankles by their laces. Brixton is an area of London that had witnessed violent race-riots in the previous year, therefore police presence was very prominent in the area. The boots that Hatoum chose to use were very particular: 'Dr. Martens' which have been traditionally worn by the British police, but were also adopted by the skinhead movement that is commonly associated with racist violence.

Kapan (2012)

Kapan is an installation conceived especially for the exhibition at Arter and produced in Istanbul in collaboration with Cam Ocağı Vakfı and Birim Metal. The work consists of five steel and glass structures constructed from the type of reinforcing rods that are often found on the top of unfinished buildings or on construction sites. Each unit is slightly different in size, but they have all been scaled to an average human height. Installed vertically, they are slightly tilted, giving the impression that they are precarious and unstable. Inside each mesh of rods, is a fragile and amorphous red glass object as if some strange creature or unspecific body part has been trapped inside its anthropomorphic cage.

20

Untitled (rack) (2011)

Untitled (rack) consists of a group of carefully arranged objects: two circular wire hangers that frame wall drawings of the Eastern and Western hemispheres and a market bag, constructed from a cut-out print of a world map, hanging from a metal coat rack. This work relates to Hatoum's *Interior/Exterior Landscape* (2010), a room-size installation of altered household furniture which includes a bed frame threaded with hair, a hair-embroidered pillow that depicts flight routes between the artist's most visited cities, a conjoined table and chair and a birdcage housing a single ball of hair.

21

Deep Throat (1996)

Deep Throat is the 'domestic' version of a larger installation by Hatoum entitled *Corps étranger*, in which she employed specialised medical equipment, normally used for endoscopy, colonoscopy and echography, to map the entire body, from the skin's surface to its interior depths. In *Deep Throat*, she used the footage depicting the entire journey through the digestive system, from mouth to anus and back again, in a continuous loop. The video is seen on the surface of a plate that has been laid out in standard fashion on a formal restaurant table.

22

Testimony (1995–2002)

The circular projection on the wall gives the impression of a remote, celestial body, with strange tectonic features on its surface moving slightly now and then, as if there is some kind of a geological or atmospheric activity on its crust. On second glance, the projected image reveals itself to be a close-up scrutiny of the movement on the surface of male testicles. The title of the work involves a pun—something Hatoum often does when titling work—on the etymological connection between ‘testicle’ and ‘testimony’.

23

Projection (cotton) (2006)

Hatoum often employs maps in her work. At times, she transforms existing, conventional maps as well as creating maps using peculiar materials such as hair, glass marbles, soap blocks, even take-away plates complete with food stains. Her handmade map, *Projection (cotton)* is crafted from cotton pulp. The image in the work presents a positive-negative reversal, where the continents appear like fissures or gaps, as if they have been etched or corroded away.

24

Present Tense (1996)

Present Tense was first shown at Anadiel Gallery in East Jerusalem in 1996. The work is made from 2400 blocks of traditional olive oil soap from Nablus, a city north of Jerusalem. The drawing on the soap blocks, created by tiny red glass beads pushed into its surface, depicts the map of the 1993 Oslo Peace Agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. The lines of beads delineate the territories that were meant to be handed back to the Palestinian authority.

25

Jardin Public (1993)

In *Jardin Public*, a classic French garden chair sports a neat triangle of pubic hair that looks as if it is growing out of the holes in the seat. Its punning title refers both to the etymological relation between the words 'pubic' and 'public' and to the public gardens in Paris. This quite humorous and light-hearted work has a surreal aspect to it and, at the same time, can be read as a comment on the fact that women's genitalia are always on public display.

26

Untitled (grater) (1996)

Untitled (milk stainer) (1996)

Untitled (flat colander) (1996)

Untitled (shaker colander) (1996)

Untitled (chinese colander) (1996)

In 1996 Hatoum spent one month on an artist residency at the Sabbathlake Shaker Community in Maine. She was struck by the beauty of their collection of old handmade kitchen utensils like graters and colanders that were fabricated by the Shakers in late 19th century. Hatoum made 'drawings' from the instruments by pressing Japanese wax paper against the objects, to make a rubbing or impression of their perforated surfaces. The resulting white on white images are delicate, like a faint trace of something almost accidental.

27

Silence (1994)

Silence takes the form of a traditional child's cot that has been reconstructed out of glass laboratory tubing. This symbol of innocence here looks like the skeleton of a bed or an empty circulatory system, becoming quite clinical or ghost-like. It is so fragile that "if you breathe, it breaks", evoking the fragility of the body.

MONA HATOUM

You Are Still Here

17/03/-27/05/2012

Curator: Emre Baykal

MONA HATOUM first became widely known in the mid '80s for a series of performance and video works that focused with great intensity on the body. In the '90s her work moved increasingly towards large-scale installations and sculpture.

Hatoum was born into a Palestinian family in Beirut in 1952 and now lives and works in London and Berlin. She has participated in numerous important exhibitions including the Turner Prize (1995), The Venice Biennale (1995 and 2005), Documenta XI (2002), the Biennale of Sydney (2006) and the Istanbul Biennial (1995 and 2011).

Solo exhibitions include Centre Pompidou, Paris (1994), Tate Britain, London (2000) Hamburger Kunsthalle, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Magasin 3, Stockholm (2004), Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2005) and Palazzo Querini Stampalia in the context of the Venice Biennale (2009). Recent solo exhibitions include "Suspendu" (MAC/VAL Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, France, 2010); "Witness" (Beirut Art Center, Beirut, 2010); "Le Grand Monde" (Fundació Marcelino Botín, Santander, 2010) and Sammlung Goetz, Munich (2011-2012).

Hatoum has been awarded the prestigious 2011 Joan Miró Prize and a solo exhibition of her work is to be held at Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona in June 2012.

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