

GALLERY 1

EVERYTHING MUST GO

Sophia Al Maria

February 22 – April 1, 2017

The Third Line is proud to present the first solo-exhibition by Sophia Al Maria in the UAE. The exhibition *EVERYTHING MUST GO* is an iteration of *Black Friday* – Sophia's solo exhibition at The Whitney Museum of American Art in 2016 – and takes its name from a new series of work. Sophia has created an immersive experience, capturing the chaotic, almost apocalyptic act of consuming. The viewer is invited to experience illusions of order in underlying confusion and pandemonium.



Sophia Al Maria, *Panic*, 2017, Digital print, 24 x 42 cm

Black Friday (2016) shown here outside museum context for the first time, is a projected video featuring primarily empty malls in Doha (Qatar) and offers an ominous take on shopping. In *Black Friday*, the shopping mall unfolds as a beautiful yet eerie space with endless disorienting corridors and overwhelming ceilings; recognisable yet frightening at the same time. Sophia presents an otherworldly 21st century temple of consumerism and confronts us with the society we have created for ourselves.

In her new series of works, *EVERYTHING MUST GO*, Sophia introduces a playful twist, juxtaposing emblems of consumerism with military jargon and captures the crux of the end of days where chaos and destruction are met by a violent military attempt to reinstate order. *EVERYTHING MUST GO* consists of a large series of stills taken from *Black Friday's* *The Litany* series – the installation of recycled mobile devices and packs of crisps splurging from shopping trolleys, displaying flickering and faltering loops of countless consumption references – each printed with either a fake beauty product term or military idiom. When read together or even at random, the grouping of words result in absurd and obscene combinations.

Throughout her practice, Sophia has been finding ways to describe 21st century life in the Gulf through art, writing, and filmmaking. She has explored different complexities such as environmental damage, religious conservatism, and historical contradictions that the Gulf has encountered. Sophia is a young artist aware of the rapid changing times and capable of articulating the controversies that cause friction in contemporary Gulf cities.

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About Sophia Al Maria

Sophia Al Maria is an artist, writer and filmmaker. She studied comparative literature at the American University in Cairo, and aural and visual cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. For the past few years, she has been carrying out research around the concept of Gulf Futurism. Her primary interests are around the isolation of individuals via technology and reactionary Islam, the corrosive elements of consumerism and industry, and the erasure of history and the blinding approach of a future no one is ready for. She explores these ideas with certain guidebooks and ideas including, but not limited to, Zizek's *The Desert of the Unreal*, As-Sufi's *Islamic Book of the Dead*, as well as imagery from Islamic eschatology, post humanism and the global mythos of Science Fiction.

Her work has been exhibited in various institutional shows around the world, including Biennial of Moving Images, Geneva, Switzerland (2016); Black Friday, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA (2016); Repetition, Villa Empain, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Belgium (2016); Imitation of Life at HOME, Manchester (2016); 89plus: Filter Bubble, LUMA Westbau, Zurich, Switzerland (2015); 2015 Triennial: Surround Audience, New Museum, New York, NY, USA (2015); Common Grounds, Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany (2015); Extinctions Marathon: Visions of the Future, Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2014); Virgin with a memory, Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK (2014); Do It, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2013); The 9th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2012); For your Eyes Only, St. Paul Street Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (2012); Dowse Museum, Wellington, New Zealand (2012); Genre Specific Xperience, New Museum, New York, NY, USA (2011) and Bendari & the Bunduqia, Waqif Art Centre, Doha, Qatar (2007). Her writing has appeared in Harper's Magazine, Five Dials, Triple Canopy, and Bidoun. In 2007, she published her first autobiographical novel, *The Girl Who Fell to Earth* (Harper Collins Perennial).

Sophia recently guest edited an issue of the experimental art-writing journal *The Happy Hypocrite*, entitled *Fresh Hell*.

She currently lives and works in London, UK.

About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

The Third Line's book publishing division *Works on Paper* collaborates with associated artists from the region to publish and co-publish content. Projects include *Presence* by photographer Lamya Gargash (2008), *In Absentia* by Tarek Al-Ghoussein (2009), *Cosmic Geometry*, an extensive monograph on Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Karen Marta (2011), and the self-titled treatise Huda Lutfi about the artist's Cairo based practice.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Fara Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorramian, Lamya Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Pوران Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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