

Anna Boghiguian

Living amidst the death

5 October - 16 November 2024

Concurrently with Anna Boghiguian's exhibition *Observations on Somethings Forgotten* in Piraeus, and her sculptural intervention *Sea & Earth* in Regent's Park as part of Frieze Sculpture, *Living Amidst the Death* in London is a eulogy to a place soon to become past.

In Piraeus, she travels in time using as vehicles two poems of the great Alexandrian Constantin V. Cavafy, recalling the notable cosmopolitan mediterranean city that once stood home for many cultures and civilizations. The paintings there, similarly to the ones in London, represent many absences. Firstly, Alexandria depicts and talks about the cycle of history.

Boghiguian has dedicated her life to moving; a cartographer as well as a memory person, she lives within the cities she chooses to explore, and unlike the tourists she is a true traveller. The cities often enter her work, and their stories, their histories.

In Cairo exists the Qarafa.

A necropolis that started developing in the 7th Century, an architectural and social wonder of the old world, still densely inhabited by its dead but also its living occupants. The current government has decided that in order to build the Passage of Paradise, the new name of the highway that will connect the city to the new administrative capital, the new Cairo, a big part of the City of the Dead will be cut off. Turmoil has been the result of this decision, unsuccessfully.

A big painting stands in the space accompanied by birds made in different materials: glass and papier mache, a technique Boghiguian has been using for years. The birds, the never ending travellers that hover above us, freely travelling from place to place, are a recurring element in Anna's work. The painting, like most of her lightly touched though densely coloured surfaces, is a hallucination within the *City of the Dead*. A monumental body to the left turns almost into architecture, and to the right more figures, a naked woman surrounded by men and next to them a lady dressed in black, fully covered in traditional garments.

In the background, the buildings are breathing purples and pinks with splashes of yellows and ochres. We recognise the great mamluk dome of the Mausoleum and Khanqah of Khawand Tughay, alongside other domes and minarets of the same period that dominate the skyline of this dusty kingdom. Outside of the citadel are more colours. Boghiguian's homage to the necropolis is not a first; she has painted it before. It is the colours here that make this portrait of a place breathe exuberantly with optimism, despite the catastrophe that beholds it, like it's never done before.

Two tile-like paintings hang on the other walls, resembling windows to the interior of the graves that, unlike anything familiar in the western Christian-centric world, are places of gathering for members of the family of the deceased; a place for eating, performing rituals and spending time next to their parted ancestors.

Living in the City of the Dead, shows a seated figure to the right, contemplating its existence. A telephone in the middle of the canvas, and the writing 'IF HE/SHE CALLS...SILENCE' runs like a frieze or a modern LED sign above the capitals of the columns, signifying the absence of presence, even when the phone rings, a quiet lonely life for those who have either chosen or were forced to locate themselves there. The colours are vibrant and the presence of pomegranates and bottles suggest life, a contradiction only a place like this carries.

Interior of a Tomb, in identical scale, is much calmer in tonality. There is no language, nor too many things. An architectural painting of an interior, with talc pinks and light blues for the walls and the tomb, that we are looking into from the main arch of the room. An archway opens to the left, signifying more space and a group of shadows to the right.

Some more birds are flying above us, can we hear them?

Bio

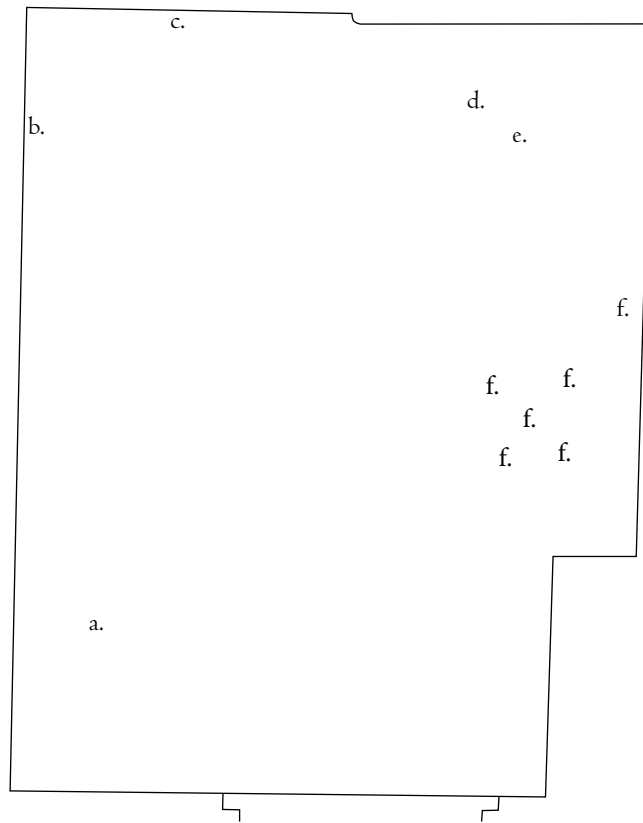
Anna Boghiguiian (b. 1946, Cairo), lives and works in Cairo.

Her solo exhibitions include: *Observations on Somethings Forgotten*, Sylvia Kouvali, Piraeus (2024); *Period of Change*, The Douglas Hyde, Dublin (2024); *A Clown Jumped into the Arena*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin (2023); *Time Of Change*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2023); *KOW*, Berlin (2022); *Sometimes unexpectedly the present meets the past*, IVAM, Valencia (2021); *A Short Long History*, S.M.A.K., Gent (2020); *Anna Boghiguiian Retrospective*, Tate Modern, London (2019); *Anna Boghiguiian: Le Carré, La Ligne et La Règle*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, Paris (2019); *The Loom of History*, New Museum, New York (2018); *Museum der Moderne*, Salzburg (2018); *Anna Boghiguiian Retrospective*, Bait Al Serkal Arts Square, Sharjah (2018); *Anna Boghiguiian Retrospective*, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2017); *Woven Winds*, Index, Stockholm (2017); *Unfinished Conversations: New Work from the Collection*, MoMA, New York (2017); *A Walk in the Unconscious*, Carré d'Art, Nîmes (2016); *A Voyage Throught Cavafy's Alexandria-Watercolors* by Anna Boghiguiian, Benaki Museum of Islamic Art, Athens (2010); *Hand in Hand*, Rodeo Gallery, Istanbul (2009); *Constantine Cavafy*, Cavafy House, Alexandria (1996).

Group exhibitions include: *A Model*, Mudam, Luxembourg (2024); *KUB in Venice*, Scuola di San Pasquale, Venice (2022); *And if I devoted my life to one of its feathers?*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2021); *Another Energy: Power to Continue Challenging - 16 Women Artists from around the World*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2021); *Carnivalesca*, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg (2021); *Nirin*, 22nd Biennale of Sydney, Cockatoo Island (2020); *James Richards: Alms for the Birds*, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2020); *A Terceira Margem/The Third Bank*, Anozero'19 – Coimbra Biennial of Contemporary Art, Círculo Sede, Coimbra (2019); *Unfinished Conversations: New Work from the Collection*, MoMA, New York (2017); *SITELines.2016*, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe (2016); *The Unfaithful Replica*, CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid (2016); *Positions #2*, Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven (2015); *Armenity*, Armenian Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennial, Venice (2015); *Saltwater: A Theory of Thought Forms*, 14th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul (2015); *The past, the present, the possible*, Sharjah Biennial 12, Sharjah (2015); *Gallery 3oIo*, Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut (2015); *Armenien Pavillon 56*, Espazione Internazionale d'Arte, Venice (2015); *How to (talk about) things that don't exist*, Fundacao de Serralves, Museu de Arte Contemporanea, Porto (2015); *Here and Elsewhere*, New Museum, New York (2014); *How to (...) things that don't exist*, 31st Biennial de São Paulo, São Paulo (2014); 1st International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Cartagena De Indias, Cartagena (2014); *Tagore's Post Office*, nGbK, Berlin (2014); *dOCUMENTA (13)*, Kassel (2012); *Plot for a Biennale*, 2011 Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah (2011); *EL ELE*, Rodeo Gallery, Istanbul (2010); *Self-Consciousness*, Veneklasen/Werner, Berlin (2010); *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* 11th International Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul (2009); *Hand in Hand*, Rodeo Gallery, Istanbul (2009); *Heterotopias*, 1st Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki (2007).

Public Collections

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris	Neue Galerie Kassel, Kassel
Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris	Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi
Frac Île-de-France, Paris	Kadist Art Foundation, Paris
Musée Carré d'Art, Nîmes	Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporaneo, Turin
Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut	Tate Modern, London
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Museum of Modern Art, New York
Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah	The Art Institute Chicago, Chicago
University of Chicago, Chicago	Benaki Museum, Athens
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven	INIVIA, Institute of International Visual Arts, London
Fundacion Jumex, Mexico City	National Museum of Wales, Wales
Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Salzburg	FRAC des Pays De La Loire, Carquefou
Index, The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm	



a. *Lonely Bird*, papier mache, 42 x 29 x 8cm, 2024

b. *Living In The City Of Dead*, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 cm, 2024

c. *Interior Of A Tomb*, wax caustic on canvas, 30 x 30 cm, 2024

d. *Lonely Bird*, cast glass, 44 x 28 x 3 cm, 2024

e. *Lonely Bird*, cast glass, 30 x 23 x 3 cm, 2024

f. *city of the dead*, acrylic on canvas, three glass birds and two papier mache birds, dimensions variable, 2024