

Caline Aoun

seeing is believing

MAXXI and Deutsche Bank present the first Italian and European solo show by the Lebanese artist Caline Aoun, Deutsche Bank's "Artist of the Year" 2018/2019

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The abstract nature of my work leads me to reflect on how exposed we are to an overload of information and images from the world. In this way we don't see more, but rather we see less
(Caline Aoun)

Rome, 27 September 2018. From 28 September **MAXXI**, together with **Deutsche Bank** will be presenting the **first solo show in Italy and Europe** by **Caline Aoun**, Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year 2018/2019.

The exhibition ***seeing is believing***, curated by **Britta Färber**, chief curator of the department of Art, Culture & Sports at Deutsche Bank and MAXXI curator **Anne Palopoli**, presents **four new productions** including **two large environmental installations** by the young Lebanese artist (Beirut, 1983), winner of the prize that each year Deutsche Bank awards to emerging or mid-career artists who have distinguished themselves for the creativity and the intrinsic value of their work. The exhibition is a part of ***Expanding The Horizon***, the MAXXI programme dedicated to the development of international partnerships between the museum, other cultural institutions and private collections.

"Expanding the Horizon, the project that includes the exhibition by Caline Aoun, underlines the crucial importance of collaboration between private bodies, businesses and collectors in the development of an institution such as MAXXI", says **Giovanna Melandri** President of the Fondazione MAXXI. "I have always thought that constant dialogue between public and private regarding the creation of joint projects is good for the world of culture, but in this case I am particularly proud because we have created a solid partnership with Deutsche Bank, based on a shared mission of support for contemporary creativity. Moreover, the exhibition by Caline Aoun, an artist we encountered thanks in part to the research into the Lebanese art scene conducted for last year's *Home Beirut*, is her first Italian and European solo show; support for young creativity and the conviction that art can build cultural bridges of fundamental importance is in fact part of MAXXI's DNA."

Following the success of past editions, for the first time this year the exhibition will be previewed at MAXXI. It will then move on to be presented at the PalaisPopulaire, Deutsche Bank's new forum for art, culture and sport at Prinzessinnenpalais in Berlin.

"Since more than 35 years Deutsche Bank promotes contemporary art and the exchange between the world cultures. And this is a special year for Deutsche Bank's artistic programme and also for Italy, which has the honour of giving the go-ahead to the exhibition tour of Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year for the first time. After the MAXXI Museum in Rome, which we thank for hosting us for the third year, Caline Aoun's personal exhibition will depart for the PalaisPopulaire, the new Deutsche Bank forum dedicated to art, culture and sport opened just yesterday in the heart of Berlin" – commented **Flavio Valeri**, Chief Country Officer di Deutsche Bank in Italy.

The work of **Caline Aoun** is born out of an alternation between abstract and concrete, physical and digital and explores concepts difficult to depict. The artist, who lives and works in Beirut and London, is capable of transforming that which is invisible and immaterial into images, installations and videos. The distinguishing feature of the exhibition, conceived specifically for the spaces of MAXXI's Gian Ferrari Gallery is this alternation of an *abstract* spirit, which expresses itself through works that suggest the idea of transience, of movement, of the cyclical transformation of reality, and of a *concrete* spirit

associated with the physicality of the museum environments involved and transformed by the actions of the artist.

seeing is believing is intended to stimulate reflection on our life, in a world in constant motion, traversed by material and immaterial flows of accumulation and dispersal, of things, people, information and images.

Aoun's thinking focuses on how the evolution of digital technology has altered our perception of information: for this reason a number of her works are born out of careful study of its circulation in the era of Internet and social networks. The artist contrasts the idea that information lacks substance and physicality and is researching the **materiality of data**.

The exhibition opens with the major environmental installation **Contemplating dispersions, 536 ml** (2018) in which the artist covers the walls of the room with sheets of rice paper. The colour with which they are impregnated fades progressively to the point in which it disappears: this is a printing process in which the ink runs out to create a passage from the most intense black through to the total absence of colour. The image saturated with colours and therefore illegible progressively decomposes in a series of lines before disappearing completely. A reflection on the theme of the exhaustion of the image, but also on excess, dissipation and evanescence that Aoun succeeds in rendering visible.

Part of **Contemplating dispersions, 536 ml** is a dividing wall composed exclusively of sheets of paper so light as to move as visitors pass by, on which the artist projects a **live feed** of the sea of Lebanon. The camera focusing on the seabed films the area in which the cables of the telecommunications network lie, along which speed Internet data at incredible speeds. By simply drawing attention to the route taken by these data, once again the artist manages to render visible that which is invisible and emphasise the physicality of the circulation of news and images, their material weight.

At the centre of the gallery is **Fountain, The ripples on the surface of duration** (2018), a fountain from which spurts the residues of the ink from the printing process, a gesture of renewal, regeneration and cyclicity. The sound produced by the dripping of the ink is for the artist a direct reference to how data constitute a constant background noise all around us.

The second part of the exhibition is composed of **Heavy duration, brief glance** (2018), another environmental installation in which the artist, who frequently makes spaces the principle feature of her work, covers the walls of the museum with a compound similar to papier maché, with the result referencing rough concrete. With this work, Aoun transforms the museum into a grotto, a material illusion in which visitors find themselves immersed, a tactile reality that leads them to interact with the physicality of the environment. And the very interaction of the visitors will cause the environment to transform and dissipate, in that continuous cyclicity that constitutes for the artist the primary characteristics of reality.

The exhibition is completed by the work **Untitled** (2018), realised with the papier-maché technique, thanks to which the artist reproduces various materials in paper.

On the occasion of the exhibition *seeing is believing*, the works **Pine Needles** (2015), in which copper moulds of around 4,000 pine needles transform lightness and transience into physicality and concreteness and **Paperplane** (2018), large sheets with fold that evoke paper aeroplanes, will be on show within the ambit of the museum collection.

Born in Beirut in 1983, **Caline Aoun** is part of a generation of young Lebanese artists who have grown up abroad following the civil war that broke out in 1975 and who have completed their artistic training outside Lebanon. She studied at the Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design and at the Royal Academy Schools in London before completing a doctorate in the Fine Arts at the University of East London in 2012.

The press kit and images of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI's website at <http://www.maxxi.art/en/area-stampa/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

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