

Exhibition:

Ania Dabrowska: Conversations About Archive

“For many years these photographs were hidden. In these bags lay my life’s work and passion, but I often wondered if anyone would ever look at them. Now, the forgotten lives, places and ideas that no longer existed are brought back to life. The light is shining on them again.”

Diab Alkarssifi in *Conversations about Archive*
by **Ania Dabrowska**, 2012

Conversations About Archive is an exhibition that launches *Lebanese Archive*, a large-scale project by artist Ania Dabrowska inspired by an unknown collection of nearly 27,000 archival photographs from the Middle East, belonging to a Lebanese émigré and former photojournalist, Diab Alkarssifi. The project is being produced in partnership with the Arab Image Foundation in Beirut and the Polish Cultural Institute in London.

Covering over 100 years of political and cultural history of the Middle East (c.1889 – 1993), Diab Alkarssifi’s collection documents family and public life, his student years in the 70s Moscow and Budapest, the Lebanese Civil Wars and countless events in his home city of Baalbeck. Part of the collection comes from small photographic studios from various cities of the Middle East, including Beirut, Damascus and Cairo. The collection was split up when Diab Alkarssifi immigrated to the UK in 1993, leaving the majority of it in Lebanon and bringing as much as he could carry with him to London. It was hidden for 17 years until 2010, when Diab Alkarssifi brought it to Ania Dabrowska’s studio at Arlington. Arlington is a landmark London hostel for homeless men and women. As a resident at the time Diab engaged in the Creative Space programme, which Ania was running as part of her SPACE Artist Residency (2010 – 2012).

Ania Dabrowska aims to present her own contemporary responses to this archival material in an artist’s book and a new series of work, to preserve the collection by constructing an online archive (collaboration with the Arab Image Foundation), and to generate public dialogue about impact of archives on contemporary art and culture – *Conversations About Archive*. This exhibition at Four Corners Gallery is the first in a series of events, to launch the multi-platform project outputs to London, Beirut and online audiences between now and Spring 2014.

Conversations About Archive exhibition pushes the boundaries of thinking about fine art photography by making visible the processes that shape development of work and by combining multi-media elements of video, sound, text with traditional photographic works and a public participation programme. The exhibition will include contemporary works by Ania Dabrowska and selected documentary photography stories from Diab Alkarssifi’s archival collection. The artist will be based at the gallery for the duration of the exhibition working on the development of the book and the project’s website with Kelly Weedon, Graphic Designer and Chris Barrow, Director from Archive (A digital design & development Studio). The exhibition display will change daily, reflecting the progress made by the project team and providing the audiences with an opportunity to observe and engage in conversations about editing and design processes.

The exhibition programme includes two public talks chaired by Ania Dabrowska with six international guest speakers with expertise in contemporary fine art, documentary photography, archives, and the Middle East culture.



Exhibition

9 - 27.09.13
Mon - Sat, 10am - 6pm
Free admission
Four Corners Gallery
121 Roman Rd, London, E2 0QN

Private View

12.09.13, 6.30pm - 8.30pm

Guest speakers in Conversations
Chaired by **Ania Dabrowska Artist**

18.09.13, 6.30-8.30pm
Laura Carderera *Independent Curator & Arts Manager*
Michelle Woodward *Photography Editor, Jadaliyya Magazine, Beirut*
Christiane Monarchi *Editor, Photomonitor*
Diab Alkarssifi *Collection Owner*

25.09.13, 6.30-8.30pm
Mariam Motamedi-Fraser *Goldsmiths College*
Jane Rolo *Director of Book Works*
Sue Steward *Arts Writer, Curator, Journalist*
Zeina Arida *Director, Arab Image Foundation, Beirut*

Coming up

01.11.13
V&A Museum / Uncertain States talk:
Ania Dabrowska and Diab Alkarssifi will talk about their collaboration at a talk chaired by **Sue Steward**

Contact

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Exhibition Support

Arts Council England, Four Corners Gallery,
Polish Cultural Institute, London,
Chan. Photographic Imaging

Project Supporters to date

Arts Council England, New Creative Markets,
European Regional Development Fund,
European Union, Four Corners Gallery,
Polish Cultural Institute, London, SPACE,
Arlington, Baltic Restaurant, World of Yachts,
The Arab Image Foundation, Beirut

Project supporters to date:



NEW CREATIVE MARKETS



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