

t r a n s f o r m e r

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WHICH YESTERDAY IS TOMORROW?

Dahlia Elsayed & Andrew Demirjian

March 14 – April 25, 2020

Opening Reception: 5-8pm, Saturday, March 14

Holding Patterns: 2-4pm, Saturday, April 4

Cultures in Contact: 2-4pm, Saturday, April 25

Pre-Sunset Pause: Every Thursday, 4-6pm

Transformer is proud to present *Which Yesterday Is Tomorrow?*, a rest stop for the future based on the past, by artists **Dahlia Elsayed** and **Andrew Demirjian**. This multi-sensory installation reimagines the Silk Road caravanserai as a potential site for the exchange of ideas and culture.



By drawing upon the vocabulary of social and sacred architecture from Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA), Elsayed and Demirjian – both diasporic artists from this region – create a space for engagement, pause, and reflection. Transformer’s interior is completely reimagined – the walls, floors, and ceilings are embellished with vibrant textiles, rugs, and furnishings; a spatialized soundtrack composed of deconstructed folk instruments, and fragrant mists and Turkish coffee envelops the air. Elsayed and Demirjian create an alternate world intended to reconnect visitors with the senses, rituals, and mythologies that have been diminished in an age dominated by relentless commerce and time scarcity.

In a region that once thrived on the cosmopolitan and mutual interchange of ideas, *Which Yesterday Is Tomorrow?* conjures a fictive location where aesthetics and ideologies are exchanged freely, establishing an alternative to the historical narrative of colonization, crisis, and territoriality portrayed in Western media. In keeping with this approach, Elsayed and Demirjian have also invited and curated a group of designers, painters, sculptors, and poets to create mementos to contribute to the installation, establishing a space for re-connection for artists from the SWANA diaspora.

Exhibition Programming:

Saturday, March 14, 5-8pm: **OPENING RECEPTION**

Saturday, April 4, 2-4pm: **HOLDING PATTERNS**: A procedural poetry and spatial sound performance.

Saturday, April 25, 2-4pm: **CULTURES IN CONTACT**: A panel discussion between artists Dahlia Elsayed and Andrew Demirjian and historians **Emily Neumeier** and **Joshua Michael White** about transcultural exchange and coffee houses. Emily Neumeier is an Assistant Professor of Islamic art at Temple University. Joshua Michael White is an Associate Professor at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design.

Ongoing:

Every Thursday, 4-6pm: **PRE-SUNSET PAUSE**: An opportunity to meditate and reflect on one’s week.

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About the Artists:

Dahlia Elsayed is an artist and writer who makes text and image-based work that synthesizes an internal and external experience of place, connecting the ephemeral to the concrete. She writes short fictions for created landscapes that take the form of narrative paintings, print and installation. Her work has been exhibited at galleries and institutions throughout the United States and internationally, including the 12th Cairo Biennale, Robert Miller Gallery, BravinLee Programs, The New Jersey State Museum and Aljira Center for Contemporary Art. Her work is in the public collections of the Newark Museum, the Zimmerli Museum, Johnson & Johnson Corporation, the US Department of State, amongst others. Dahlia has received awards from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the Edward Albee Foundation, Visual Studies Workshop, the MacDowell Colony, Women's Studio Workshop, Headlands Center for the Arts, and the NJ State Council on the Arts. She received her MFA from Columbia University, and lives and works in New Jersey. Ms. Elsayed is a Professor of Humanities at CUNY LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, NY.

Andrew Demirjian is an interdisciplinary artist who works with remix, rhythm and ritual. He creates environments for critical reflection through scraping and recombining popular culture, making intricate collages of sound and language. His work is often presented in non-traditional exhibition spaces and takes the form of interactive installations, generative art, multi-channel videos and live performances. He is currently a Fellow at the MIT Open Documentary Lab, where he is working on a computational text analysis project for linguistic remixing of vast quantities of video files. Andrew's work has been exhibited at The Museum of the Moving Image, Eyebeam, Fridman Gallery, Rush Arts, the White Box gallery, Cyberfest, Fieldgate Gallery, the Center for Book Arts, The Newark Museum and many other galleries, festivals and museums. He is the author of *Pan-terrestrial People's Anthem*, a book of poetry and collection of music that remixes the lyrics and songs of 195 national anthems. The MacDowell Colony, Puffin Foundation, Artslink, Harvestworks, Diapason, The Experimental Television Center, The Bemis Center, LMCC Swing Space, The Visual Studies Workshop and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts are among some of the organizations that have supported his work. Andrew teaches theory and production courses in emerging media in the Film and Media Department and the Integrated Media Arts MFA program at Hunter College.

The artists that Elsayed and Demirjian invited to contribute to their exhibition include (as of 2.19.20): [Samira Abbassy](#), [Negar Ahkami](#), [Sayran Barzani](#), [Suzan Batu](#), [Tarek Bouraque](#), [Aiham Dib](#), [Linda Ganjian](#), [Hushidar Mortezaie](#), and [Anahita Vossoughi](#).

Exhibition Hours: Wednesday-Saturday 12-6pm and by appointment

Image credit: Dahlia Elsayed and Andrew Demirjian

t r a n s f o r m e r is a Washington, DC based 501 (c) 3 artist-centered, non-profit visual arts organization. Founded in June 2002 by artists & arts organizers, Transformer provides a consistent, supportive, and professional platform for emerging artists to explore and present experimental artistic concepts, build audiences for their work, and advance their careers. A catalyst and advocate for contemporary artists and emergent expression in the visual arts, Transformer connects and promotes emerging visual artists within regional, national and international contexts through innovative exhibition and programs partnerships with a broad & diverse range of individual and organizational partners.

t r a n s f o r m e r's 2020/21 Exhibition Series and programs are supported by: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/NEA, The National Endowment for the Arts Art Works, The Robert Lehman Foundation, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer – a growing group of individual donors & corporate sponsors.