

## Rayyane Tabet

### HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

30 October 2018 – 26 February 2019

Galleria Franco Noero is proud to present *HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT*, the first solo exhibition of Rayyane Tabet in Torino, in the space on Via Mottalciata. For this occasion, Tabet realized six new works that look into the accidental and interconnected histories of a bar in Beirut, a little known brand of beer, a foundry in Turin, a font designed in 1934, a series of erotic novels and the largest block of marble ever carved by human hands.

Rayyane Tabet's practice is founded on the use of objects and stories - often of a personal nature - as a starting point for the exploration of remembrance and individual narratives. Tabet's works, influenced by his training in architecture, act as a counterpoint to official histories, giving agency to subjective understandings of major socio-historical events. Despite their grounding in experience and self-directed research, Tabet's works usually manifest as stark, minimalist forms attesting to the power of the object to articulate its own history.

**Still life with neon, fridge and beer** is an installation with a 1:1 replica of the neon of "Torino Express"- a bar in Beirut whose name references the train to Torino, and a fridge filled with "Al Arz" beers - a brand of beer available in restaurants in Europe which claims to be from Lebanon but is actually not produced or sold there. The installation creates an impossible bar where these two found objects meet and are activated.

**Arabic for all** is a mural based on the sample font sheet of *Arabo Stretto* - a font designed in 1977 at the Nebiolo Foundry in Torino right after the foundry was sold to FIAT and as a way to open up to the emerging markets of the Arab World. Since the typeface designer did not speak Arabic the sample sheet was made from an accidental succession of characters that did not have any meaning. The font was not ordered and soon after the company went bankrupt. **Arabic for all** turns this sample sentence with no meaning, in a font never made, of a company long gone into a large-scale mural.

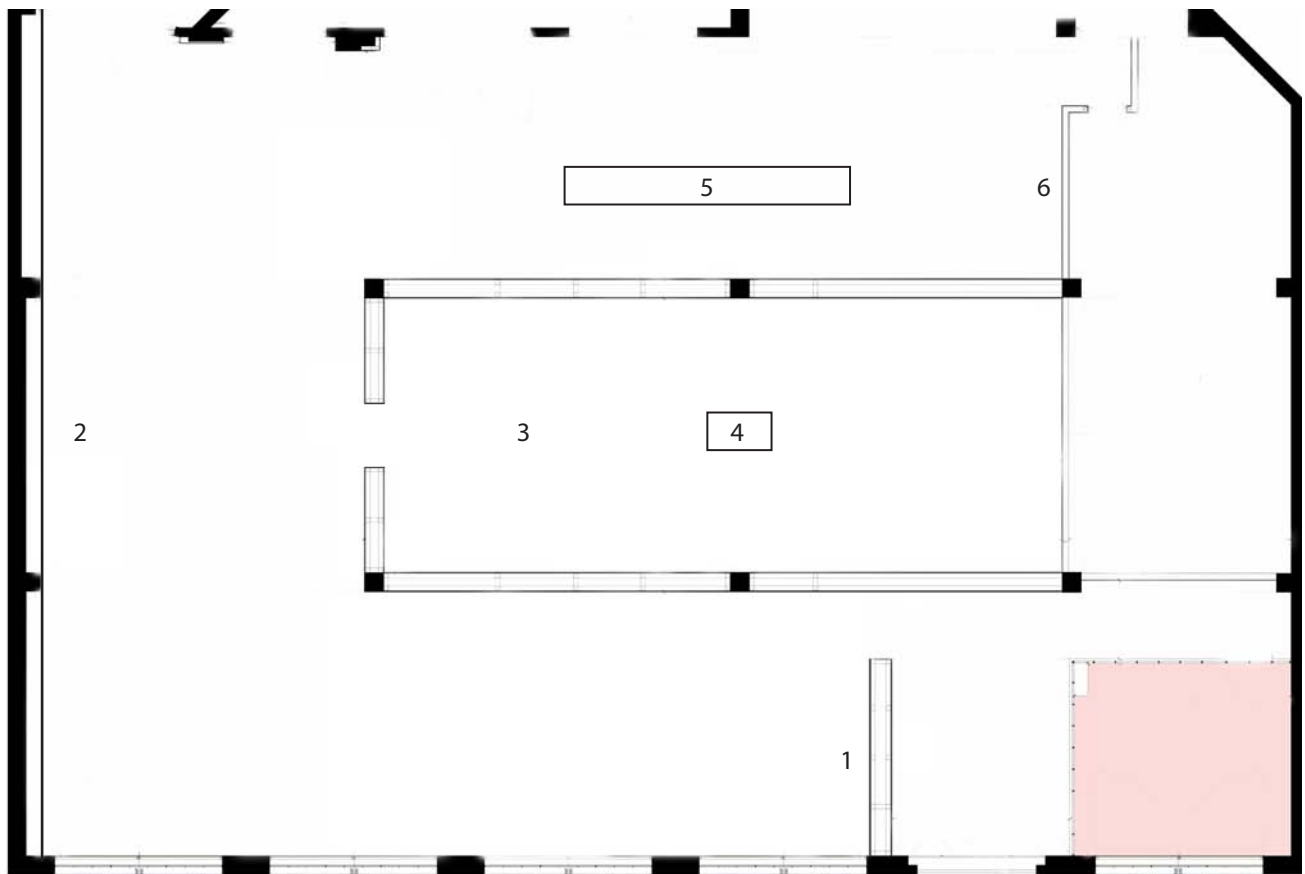
**Road Trip** is a large room scale installation of postcards that follows the story of another font designed in the Nebiolo Foundry in Torino. *Veltro* was a typeface designed in 1934 and was known among the printers of its time by the nickname of *Mussolini*, because of the resemblance of its capital M to that of the signature of the Duce. Interestingly, *Veltro* was for at least thirty years the most popular script typeface for travel postcards produced in Italy. Over the past few years Tabet has been collecting postcards that feature this font. **Road Trip** turns the central room of the gallery into a narrative frieze using around 1,000 of these found postcards. The sequence follows a journey from Baalbeck in Lebanon to Piazza Carignano in Torino and goes through all twenty regions of Italy.

Following the decline of movable type printing several foundries sold their equipment. Their machines and characters remain today in the archives of specialized printing presses. **Veltro** is a take away poster made using one full set of the original *Veltro* font borrowed from 'Anonima Impressori', a letterpress studio in Bologna and printed by 'Archivio Tipografico', a letterpress print shop in Torino.

**A Short History of Lebanon** is a custom made bookcase that can hold all 200 SAS novels. SAS is a series of pulp erotic novels written between 1965 and 2013 by Gerard de Villiers. Besides several particularities (like all the covers featuring a woman brandishing a gun), these novels all contained actual intelligence information that de Villiers was privy to due to his work as a journalist. In a sense, these works of fiction hold within them evidence of truth. 6 of the 200 novels take place in Lebanon and were released before or right after major historical moments in the life of the country. As such these pulp novels offer an alternative way of writing the history of Lebanon that has since its independence in 1946 never had a common textbook on its own history.

**What Goes Around Comes Around, What Goes Up Must Come Down** is a collage of found postcards that feature the Mussolini Obelisk at Foro Italico. The obelisk is made from the largest block of marble ever carved by human hands in Carrara, it is 17 meters tall and weighs over 300 tons. As the title suggests this is the work that closes the exhibition but also the starting point of it as it literally describes a full circle. A few years ago, Tabet was intrigued by an article written in the 70's, which stuck in his mind: the article described the attempt of understanding how large stone blocks were moved in Baalbek, Lebanon to build the Roman temple there paralleling that to the 72 oxen that were employed in Carrara to move the obelisk. Once Tabet began this research the shifts between Lebanon and Italy kept on happening.

**Rayyane Tabet** (1983, Achkout, Lebanon) is an artist that lives and works in Beirut. His work was part of Manifesta 12 (2018), the 21<sup>st</sup> Sydney Biennial (2018), the 15<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial (2017), the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sao Paulo Biennial (2016), the 6<sup>th</sup> Marrakech Biennial (2016), the 12<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Biennial (2015, 2011) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Museum Triennial (2012). He has had solo shows at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, daadgalerie in Berlin, Witte de With Center of Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, Fondazione Antonio dalle Nogare in Bolzano, Museo Marino Marini in Florence, and TROUW Amsterdam. In 2019 Tabet will have solo shows at the Carré D'Art in Nimes, at Parasol Unit in London and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



1. **Still life with neon, fridge and beer**

2018

Red neon (*Torino Express*), under-counter glass door fridge, *Al Arz* beer bottles  
Variable dimensions

2. **Arabic for all**

2018

Black paint on wall  
400 x 1600 cm

3. **Road trip**

2018

Approx. 1.000 used postcards  
Variable dimensions

4. **Veltro**

2018

1.000 letterpress posters  
70 x 50 cm

5. **A Short History of Lebanon**

2018

Cedar wood, six modified books  
138 x 420 x 30 cm

6. **What Goes Around Comes Around, What Goes Up Must Come Down**

2018

19 used postcards, acid-free tape  
ø 85 cm