



PROJECTS

Dropping a Yassin Dynasty Vase

Raed Yassin

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Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn (1995) by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is a photo-triptych documenting the fleeting performance announced in the work's title. Weiwei holds in his hands an ancient (roughly 2,000 years-old) vase in the first photograph, cops it in the next, and the vase smashes in the third. Creating an antique ready-made, a concept/artefact that characterises a large part of his body of work, the artist examines and critiques dominant notions of history, heritage, culture and preservation.

In 2011, I travelled to Jingdezhen, one of the porcelain capitals of China, to fabricate seven porcelain vases depicting key battles of the Lebanese civil war. The work sought to synthesize the ancient tradition of narrating epic battles and mythologies, the intricate fabric of the oral and written histories of the Lebanese civil war, and the decorative-reproducible condition of the object itself into a material testimony of global art production, estrangement, and the appropriation/translation of cultural heritage.



Raed Yassin, *Dropping a Yassin Dynasty Vase*, 2012-2013, 3 photos 90x125 cm each. Courtesy of Kalfayan Galleries, Athens - Thessaloniki.

Commissioning a Lebanese illustrator and Chinese ceramic masters to realize the work, a circuit of collaboration and delegation was set up, reflecting on questions of centralized authority and authorship. Choosing to produce this work in Jingdezhen was not the result of an attraction or interest in a globalised, trending, and low-cost mode of globalised production. In fact, Jingdezhen, is one of the least 'global' cities in China. Instead, the work was a gesture of geographic and cultural migration, by which a Lebanese history is represented according to Chinese craftsmanship and aesthetic affinities.

Dropping a Yassin Dynasty Vase is a photo-triptych documentation of a performance held for a few seconds in Jingdezhen, one that is both embedded within and critical of the assembly lines of global art production. The photographs capture the destruction of one of the prototypes of one of the vases that ended up in the series *Yassin Dynasty*. The triptych's title (*Dropping ...*) also discloses an attitude that is simultaneously cathartic and cynical to a personal and familial history – to a 'dynasty with no authority'. *Dropping a Yassin Dynasty Vase* is a parallel work, homage and copy of Weiwei's *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raed Yassin

Raed Yassin was born in Beirut in 1979. He graduated from the theatre department at the Institute of Fine Arts in Beirut in 2003. An artist and musician, Yassin's work often originates from an examination of his personal narratives and their workings within a collective history, through the lens of consumer culture and mass production. He has exhibited and performed his work in numerous museums, festivals and venues across Europe, the Middle East, the United States and Japan. Yassin was awarded the Fidus Prize (2009), the Abraaj Capital Art Prize (2012), the AFAC grant for production (2010), the YATF grant for production (2008 & 2012) and the Cultural Resource grant for production (2008). Yassin is one of the organizers of IRTIJAL Festival, and has released several music albums and founded the production company Annihaya in 2009. He is also a founding member of "Atfal Ahdath" a Beirut based art collective. He currently lives and works in Beirut and represented by Kalfayan Galleries (Athens–Thessaloniki).

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